

THE OFFICIAL SEGA SATURN MAG
SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE
SEGA
No.1 FOR SATURN
ISSUE 14 £2.75
DECEMBER 1996
VIRTUA COP 2
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DAYTONA
Hot Rod or Jalopy?
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CHRISTMAS NIGHTS! SEGA'S INCREDIBLE FESTIVE GIVE AWAY!



WELCOME
To: Warwickshire County Council
Department of Health
Petition against Dominic Wheadon
We, the undersigned, wish to submit an official complaint against Mr Dominic Wheadon of 13 Turret Grove, Coventry.
Despite repeated requests from residents Mr Wheadon refuses to remove the 25ft hardboard Venus Fly Trap, pig and palm tree from his garden. The said monstrosities attract hordes of undesirable tourists to the street and causes frequent disruption in an otherwise quiet, respectable area.
Mr Wheadon also refuses to remove the skunks, turtles and bandicoots which continually escape from his garden and foul the footpaths and grass verges.
Lastly we would demand that Mr Wheadon be restrained from playacting scenes from "Crash Bandicoot", the PlayStation video game in his garden, as he creates noise and disturbance all night long, lowering the tone of the neighbourhood.
Name
Address
Professor C. Hobsbaum
14 Carnegie House, Inglewood Rd.
Mrs. W. Collins
Mr. G.C. Collins
26 Chester Close
Braverton Cobb
4 Plympton Ave
40 Inglewood Road.
32 Turret Grove
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NEXT MONTH...
A STUNNING DEMO CD!

In next month's SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE, we will be unleashing yet another brilliant Demo CD to you - the fine SSM readership. Sega Flash Volume III (for 'tis its name) promises to be one of the best CDs ever pressed in the whole history of the world ever, and promises to include the following awesome stuff:

PLAYABLE LEVELS!

DAYTONA CHAMPIONSHIP CIRCUIT EDITION

Would you believe it - a frankly SUPERLATIVE PLAYABLE DEMO of this most awaited of road racing games? Lovingly crafted by the CS Team (who were responsible for the epoch-making Sega Rally), Daytona CCE is a super-accomplished road racer taking elements of the original and adding dollops of new stuff. As you shall discover when you see this brilliant demo.

VIRTUAL ON

Big robot battling action! AM3 return to the Saturn in true style, with an apocalyptic excursion into arcade-perfect territory! The original arcade game required TWO Model 2 arcade boards to handle the power of this awesome title and as a translation, it's almost perfect on Saturn, replete with the brilliant two-player mode of the coin-op! This, and more, YOU shall discover when you check out the FULLY PLAYABLE DEMO next month!

In the meantime, you can enjoy more Virtual On by examining page18 of this journal, where we interview AM3 and get the full monty on the game. Information direct from the horse's mouth - courtesy of SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE, of course.

TOMB RAIDER

It's out in the shops now and it just happens to be the greatest arcade adventure available for the Saturn... a fact that will become obvious when you see our BRILLIANT PLAYABLE DEMO, forming part of our demo CD next month. Witness the full power of Core Design's greatest ever game for yourself with the aid of next month's SSM!

SEGA WORLDWIDE SOCCER '97

Forget every 3D football game you've ever played on Saturn, PlayStation, PC... anywhere! Sega have produced what is without exception the best soccer game in the known universe. The best graphics. The best playability. All of the options you'd want. It's frankly amazing. And on the demo disc, IT'S FULLY PLAYABLE!



ONLY £3.99!

ALSO INCLUDING NON-PLAYABLE DEMOS OF...

FIGHTING VIPERS

AM2's pseudo sequel to VF2 - amazing stuff!

VIRTUA COP 2

The best gun game ever. And that's a fact.

DARK SAVIOUR

All-new adventure from the creators of LandStalker. It's a stunning RPG!

NiGHTS

Check out the stunning nature of the Sonic Team classic.

BUG 2!

Faster, bigger, better. Bug!'s back!

AND MORE!

The full line-up of Sega Flash Volume III has not been set at time of going to press - the content may change on the final disc.

HOW DO I GET IT?

Remember all the hassle you had getting the last demo disc? Well, put all fears of a repeat of that horrible experience out of your mind. Completely. EVERY ISSUE of SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE will have a demo CD on the cover and all at the bargain price of £3.99! Rejoice, all ye faithful!

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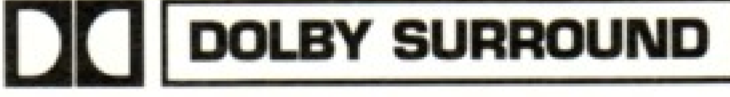
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Competition rules
EMAP Images and Sega staff and their families (especially Rob's) are prohibited from entering any Sega Saturn magazine competition. The editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.



We regret that we cannot answer tips enquiries personally, or by telephone. Sorry.

SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE USE



TO TEST ALL SOFTWARE

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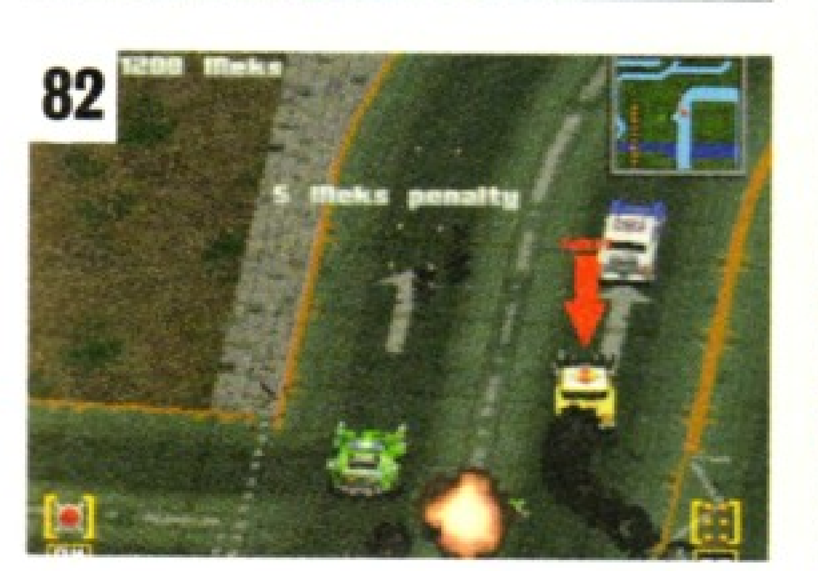
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114 Link

PREVIEWS

REVIEWS

REGULARS

PLUS!



Exclusive has been piled upon exclusive in this frankly spectacular issue. Don't believe me? Check out the first Virtua Cop 2 review, full-on interviews with Exhumed creators Lobotomy plus the AM3 Virtual On producer Mr Juno Watari. And! Swoon at the certain incredible news about Quake also found on these pages! Throw in a huge reviews frenzy plus some stupendous showcases and we have what has come to be known as "Masters' Coverage". The mag's been pretty much transformed in the last couple of months and this is set to continue thanks to the sorry departure of Rob and Rad this issue. That means new blood and yet more change, hopefully for the better. The cover-mounted CDs are also set to become more regular, hopefully every three months. Beginning with the next issue (again hopefully). Fingers crossed eh?

Sprechen sie harden coren!?!
Richard Leadbetter, Editor

QUAKE: EARTH-SHA



Just as we were sending this issue of SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE off to be printed, we discovered some incredible news. id software's Quake is in development... and apparently it's going to be on Saturn only!

Quake is the undisputed king of PC games at the moment, selling untold hundreds of thousands across the globe. The next step in 3D shoot 'em ups, Quake takes Doom, gives it a full 3D environment, more advanced texture-mapping and lighting effects and boosts the realism still further. It's the only PC game worth playing at the moment, in our hallowed opinion. In terms of gameplay, Quake remains very similar to Doom. You start the game kitted out only with a small bore combat shotgun and your job is to work your way through each level, collecting extra weapons like double-barrelled shotguns, grenade launchers and nail guns and using them to battle a horrific array of demonic creatures.

Enormous flying slug-like creatures, zombie soldiers, fiends, and lightning-throwing "Shamblers" are just some of the many creatures standing between you and the exit of each level. If it all sounds perhaps too Doom-esque for you, you just have to see the game in action to witness why this game is so much better. Rather than just have a series of rooms next to each other perhaps at different heights (as in Doom), Quake is like Exhumed in that it can have rooms above rooms, allowing for some superlative true-3D action. The graphics are also much better - torches light up the walls, realistic shadows are cast... that kind of thing. These shadows are realistic too, meaning that you can hide in them (great in multiplayer).

However, the best thing about Quake is the sheer playability of the game. id software are the greatest development house in the US and they concentrate on gameplay above all else. During development of the PC game, they stripped out entire concepts and better graphics routines simply because they detracted from the gameplay. Hopefully we'll see this commitment to gameplay and playability replicated when it comes to producing the Saturn version.





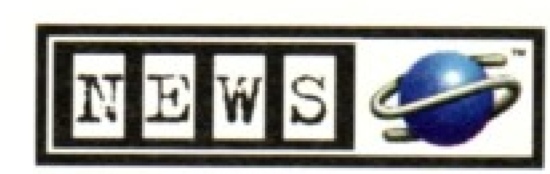
Most of Quake's weaponry will be familiar to Doom players, but the all-new lightning gun (aka Thunderbolt) is a great new addition - it fries the opposition!

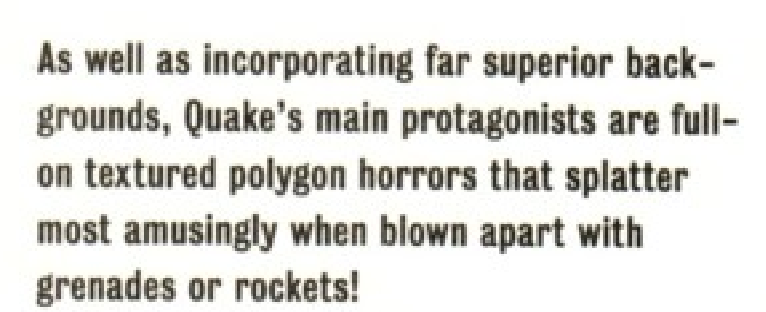


EXCLUSIVE FOR SATURN?



The exact nature of the deal that Sega have struck is still clouded in mystery with some sources saying it will be a total Saturn exclusive (that is, if all goes to plan, there will be no PlayStation version) and other rumours indicating a hefty window of exclusivity. Whatever the case, you'll read about it first in SATURN MAGAZINE. At the moment, few details




As well as incorporating far superior backgrounds, Quake's main protagonists are full-on textured polygon horrors that splatter most amusingly when blown apart with grenades or rockets!





TTERING NEWS

have emerged on the state of the Saturn game.

Sega of America have entrusted the game to an elite programming team, and they're working on making the game as close to the PC original as is humanly possible. Unfortunately, this means that we've had to use PC screenshots for this piece, but hopefully the Saturn version shouldn't be much different at all. Exhumed shows that the Saturn has more than enough power to produce an awesome rendition of Quake, so hopes are high for an excellent translation.

Not surprisingly, we'll have first dibs on the game when the Saturn code does appear, so STICK WITH US! The game should be out on Saturn around Easter 1997.



THE MULTIPLAYER QUESTION

The great news is that the Saturn game should boast multiplayer action. Quake was designed primarily as a multiplayer experience - in this game mode, the levels are cleared of all monsters and extra weapons, power-ups and ammo are dotted around. The basic aim is to collect these and blast the hell out of your opponent, racking up the "frags" left, right and centre.

Compatibility with the Saturn NetLink seems to be pretty much guaranteed, meaning that you can play Quake over the Internet, although just how many players can connect (the PC version supports 16) remains a mystery for the moment. Link-up cable shenanigans would be much appreciated (it's in Doom and Hexen after all) but nothing's been confirmed yet. Regardless, you should be highly excited by the news that the greatest multiplayer game in existence is coming to Saturn!







Quake in multiplayer is the best game ever. Let's hope the Saturn can support more than one opponent!



WHERE IT BEGAN

Although Quake arrived two-and-a-half years after Doom, ideas for the game were being mooted before Doom was even begun. Originally conceived as a first-person perspective action role-playing game with huge multiplayer facilities, Quake first appeared on PC in the form of a "DeathMatch Test". Here you could play multiplayer only on three special maps id designed. Despite being far from complete, the test showed off the graphics technology really well and made for some brilliant multiplayer action.

THE SHAREWARE RELEASE

Quake was finally released in a near-final form on PC in July. id are the masters of shareware software - that is, they release a portion of the game for free over the Internet and then take orders over the phone for the majority of the game. Even in its shareware form it was possible to play Quake over the Internet and have access to eight levels.

THE NINE INCH NAILS CONNECTION

Quake features music and sound effects from the man behind Nine Inch Nails - Trent Reznor (in fact, he is NIN - the "band" are merely formed for live tours). For Quake, he contributed a huge range of amazing ambient sound effects along with some atmospheric music (again, more ambient than tuneful). The collaboration between id and NIN came about due to a mutual appreciation of each others' work. Trent Reznor supplied all of his audio completely free of charge, although there's the possibility of a fuller commercially available Quake music CD in the future. There's absolutely no reason why all of the audio from the PC game shouldn't make it into the Saturn version.

THE FULL VERSION

A couple of months after the shareware game was released, id finally completed the entire game, which was licensed to GT Interactive for a European release. Additionally, GT were put in charge of all console translations...

QUAKE... THE FUTURE

By the time you read this, the next chapter in the Quake story will have unfolded. QuakeWorld is a new enhancement for Quake Internet play. Because of the nature of the Internet, Quake can be pretty slow to play on a normal modem connection to the Net. With QuakeWorld, id have refined the game solely for Internet play, speeding up the connection immensely. Quake Clans have also formed over the Net - here, Quake players team together to take on other clans in all-out bloodbaths. The main QuakeWorld server keeps track of every single kill over the Net, compiling statistics continuously.

HMV CHARTS

Week ending November 2nd

KNOW HMV • KNOW GAMES

If you would like to see your chart features, send in your top ten to READER CHARTS, SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON EC1R 3AU. Anyone who has their charts printed will receive a game for their troubles! Matthew Wilcox, a game is making its way to you sir!

	HMV CHARTS		SATURN MAGAZINE CHARTS		READER CHARTS
1	Sega Worldwide Soccer '97	1	Virtua Cop 2	1	Sega Worldwide Soccer
2	Tomb Raider	2	Christmas NiGHTS	2	Exhumed
3	Fighting Vipers	3	Virtual On	3	NiGHTS
4	Night Warriors	4	Street Fighter Alpha 2	4	Sea Bass Fishing
5	Alien Trilogy	5	Fighting Vipers	5	Athlete Kings
6	NiGHTS	6	Sega Worldwide Soccer '97	6	Bubble Bobble Pack
7	Virtua Cop	7	Exhumed	7	Blam! Machinehead
8	Bubble Bobble Pack	8	Rainbow Islands	8	Alien Trilogy
9	Athlete Kings	9	Daytona CCE	9	Virtua Fighter Kids
10	Bust-a-Move 2	10	Tomb Raider	10	Destruction Derby

GOODBYE ROB AND RAD

I first met Radion Automatic when he came for his interview on the original (and best) MEAN MACHINES. Although he was a bizarre-looking 17-year-old shelf stacker with no dress sense, both myself and Jaz Rignall were super-impressed with the quality of his writing. Much the same was true when a certain "Robert Bright" interviewed for Staff Writer status on MEAN MACHINES just a year later. At that time, the mag and its staff were the kings of all they surveyed. Common peasants dropped onto their knees before us. The sun didn't bloody go down until we told it to. There was nothing we couldn't do. Apart from get a decent wage (even though the mag's profits were in the millions). Over the years, through their writing, these two lads have contributed immeasurably to the success of our consoles magazines (apart from when Rob disappeared for three years to do a degree). And now they're off. Disappearing into the real world, no less. After the insolent whelps uncovered my secret scheme to seize the Power Cosmic and conquer the world, Rob's now been exiled to the Czech republic to write for the Prague Post (I'm not making that up). Young Rad on the other hand moves across to EMAP Metro to become Reviews Editor for popular music journal, Select. So... good ridd... er, good luck and all to them... Which leads me on these bits:

WANTED: DEPUTY EDITOR

With the "departure" of Rob I require a second-in-command to lend a hand on the good ship SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE. You will have at least a couple of years' experience of magazine journalism, have a huge unquenchable enthusiasm and (unfeasibly anal) knowledge of videogames - especially the Sega ones. And you will be good at them too. Superlative organisational skills and likeable personality are also musts. If you qualify on all counts (emphasis on ALL) write to me at the address below, marking your envelope DEPUTY EDITOR APPLICATION.

WANTED: STAFF WRITER

A talented young thrusting writer is required for duty on SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE. An encyclopaedic knowledge and genuine liking for Saturn games is requested and required, along with a sound grasp of the English language. Qualifications? A-level standard English is a good start, and history can help too, although neither is really essential. Being good at games is. Experience? Again, not essential, it's ability, drive and commitment I'm looking for. Age? You'd almost certainly have to be 17 or over. Send in a CV along with examples of your work to me, Richard Leadbetter, at STAFF WRITER APPLICATIONS, SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.

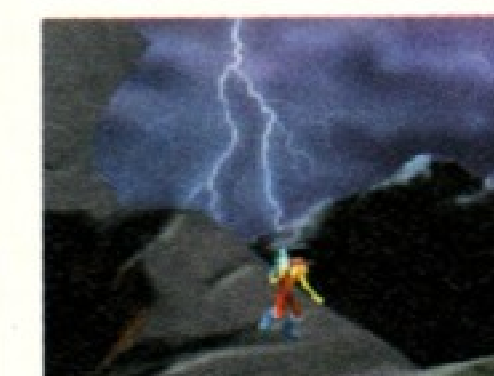
DESCENT IS SENT DOWN

Some time ago we featured a news article suggesting that Descent, the first-person perspective shoot 'em up, was due for a Saturn release. The publishers responsible, Interplay, have since informed us that Descent has been scrapped. The reasons for this would seem to be an incompatibility in trying to port the code over from the PlayStation, with the resultant effect that the programmers couldn't really be bothered with it anymore. Oh well, there's plenty of other Interplay stuff on the way instead. Most of it is found on these news pages.

SHINY GO WILD!

The words 'dysfunctional' and 'teenager' tend to go hand in hand, but when Wex, your typical self-centred junk-eating teen find himself cast into another universe, he's quick to come to his senses and gives up his irresponsible activities in favour of saving the universe. Hooking up with eight teen aliens to make 'The Wild Nines', they engage in battles with their arch-enemy, Karn. Published by Interplay and developed by Shiny – those responsible for Earthworm Jim – this is a platform shoot 'em up with all the trimmings. There are plenty of weapons including a telescopic staff that Wex uses as both a martial arts stick and pole vault. The backdrops are all in interactive 3D, and there's an impressive 60,000 frames of animation. Whether this is the kind of game to match the likes of NiGHTS is another matter but we'll keep you posted on the game's progress.



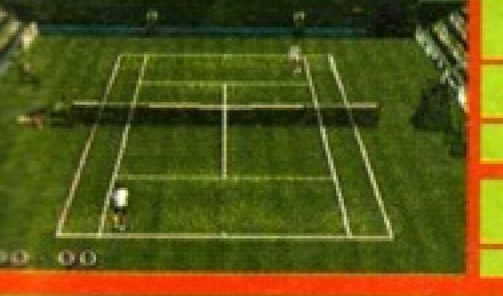


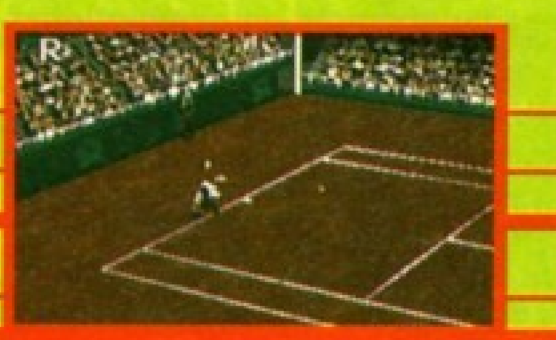
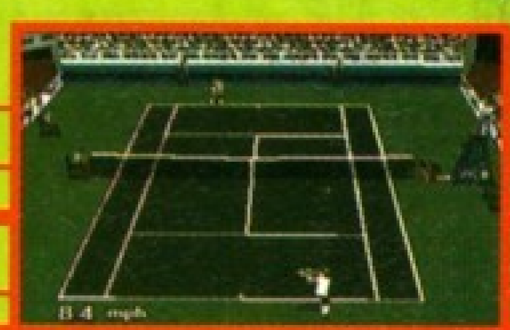


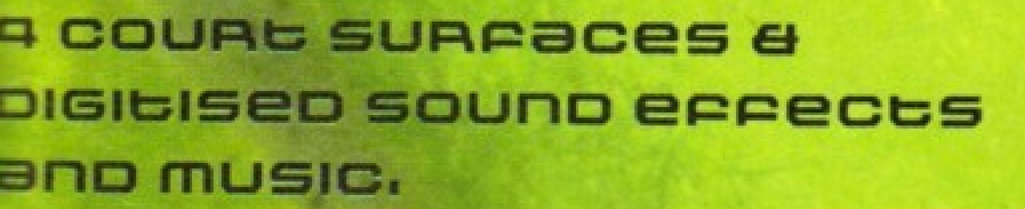


Tennis Between TWO People Is A Beautiful Thing

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player movement.

8 characters + special
hidden characters.



real-time 3D graphics.

each player has special
and unique 'combo' moves

real-time action replays

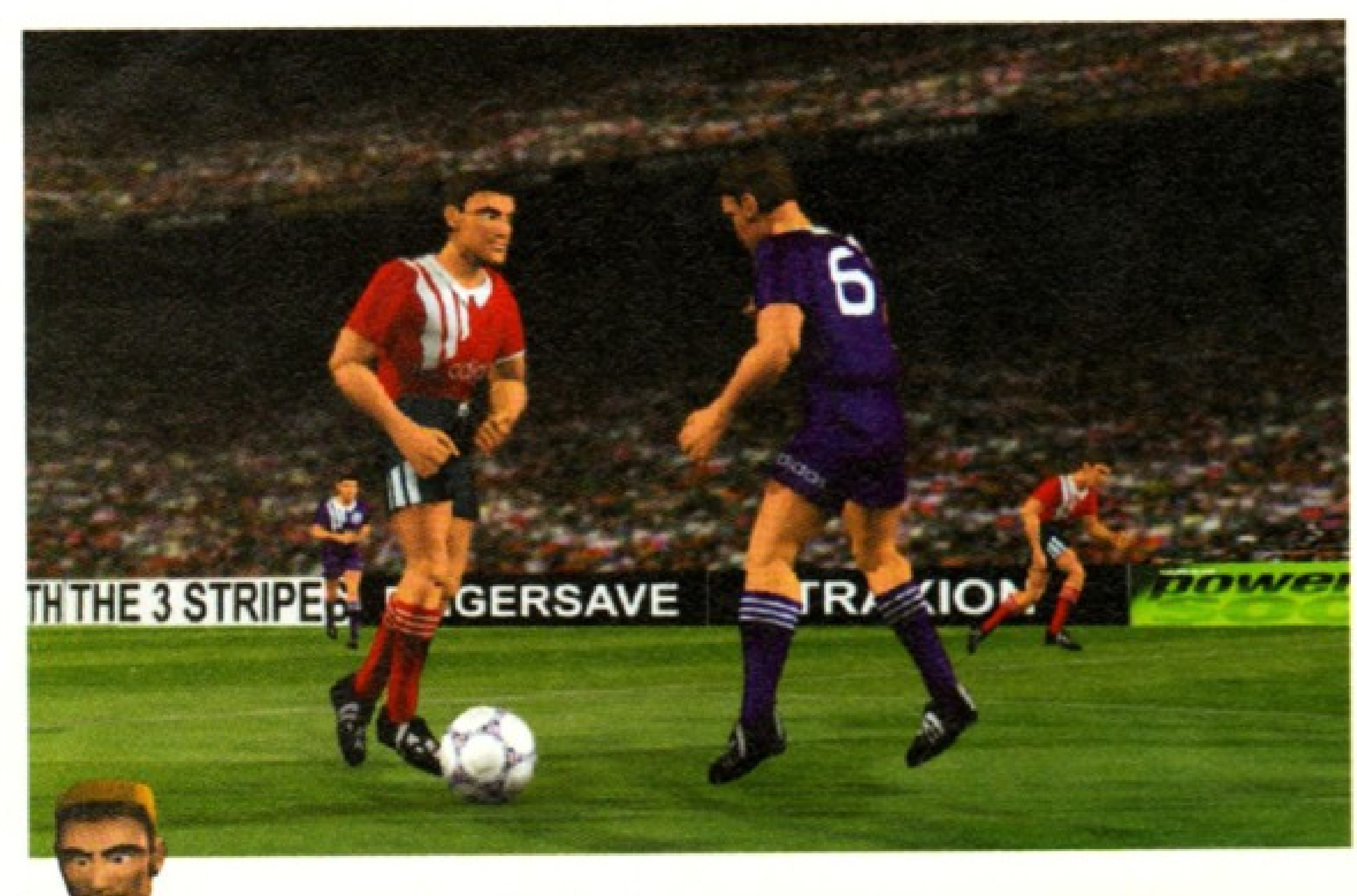






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ADIDAS FOR SATURN

Football fans across the country are right now enjoying Sega Worldwide Soccer '97 - the undisputed king of soccer sims. Some might even call it the best football game ever. Well, the choice of fine quality sims looks set to continue as Psygnosis continue to roll out their PlayStation catalogue onto Saturn.

Adidas Power Soccer was the well-received PlayStation soccer title released earlier in the year. It has the usual stuff - full 3D graphics, lovely motion capture. However, it also includes some pretty spectacular special moves, designed to lift the game from simulation into the heady realms of arcade gameplay.

Whether it can match the brilliance of Worldwide Soccer remains to be seen, but there's a huge gap between the two games' releases - Power Soccer is due in March 1997.



Adidas Power Soccer features all the usual 3D and motion capture gimmickry...



... as well as a huge, somewhat bewildering array of camera angles.

JOLLY HOCKEY STICKS

They slip, they slide, they're knocked on their hide! They're ice hockey players (insert your own "puck" gag here), and the latest installment in this seemingly inexhaustible genre comes courtesy of EA. NHL Hockey follows along very similar lines to previous incarnations featuring all of the teams in the league, loads of play options, plenty of camera angles, the ever-present replay facility and even the classic portly American commentator with mandatory moustache who's probably a familiar face to Americans. Anyway, it's looking pretty smart at present and due out before Christmas so we'll be bringing you a review next month.





BLOCKBUSTER CHARTS

TOP TEN VIDEO GAMES

1	EXHUMED
2	NIGHTS ➡
3	DESTRUCTION DERBY
4	ALIEN TRILOGY
5	GUARDIAN HEROES
6	WIPEOUT
7	PANZER DRAGOON 2
8	ULTIMATE MK 3
9	TITAN WARS
10	TRUE PINBALL

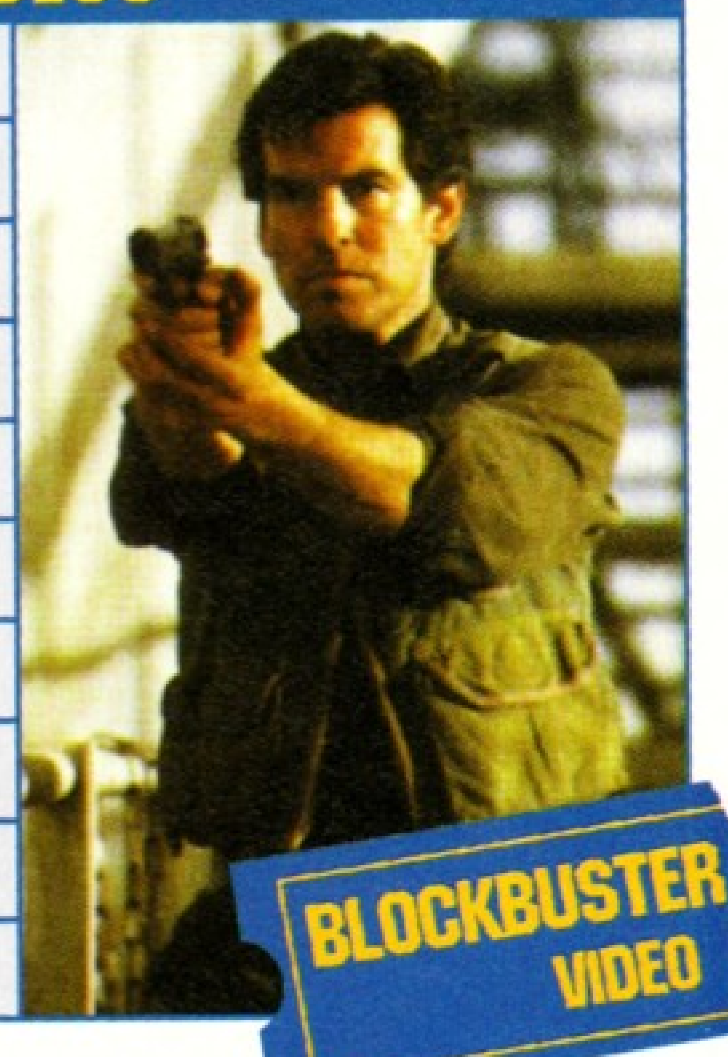
TOP TEN RENTAL VIDEOS

1	TWELVE MONKEYS ➡
2	BIRDCAGE
3	TOY STORY
4	GET SHORTY
5	HEAT
6	CASINO
7	TRAINSPOTTING
8	JUMANJI
9	SUDDEN DEATH
10	FATHER OF THE BRIDE 2



TOP TEN RETAIL VIDEOS

1	TOY STORY
2	GOLDENEYE ➡
3	LORD OF THE DANCE
4	BRAVEHEART
5	101 DALMATIONS
6	SEVEN
7	APOLLO 13
8	MR BEAN BEST BITS
9	JEREMY CLARKSON'S SMASH HITS AND MISSES
10	CASPER



BLOCKBUSTER VIDEO



IF YOU'RE SERIOUSLY INTO BLACKHEADS, AND YOU'D RATHER NOT BE, CHECK OUT NEW OXY BLACKOUT. IT HAS SPECIAL STICKY TAPES THAT LIFT OUT BLACKHEADS GENTLY. BLACKHEADS? OXYCUTE 'EM!

TEMPEST 2000: BRILLIANT

Retro games have definitely come into vogue, due in no small part to the enthusiasm of our very own Dave Kelsall – readers of our sister publication CVG will know him as the lovable resident in the Computer Cabin. Anyway, when Dave found out that Tempest was coming to the Saturn he went all glassy eyed and started waxing lyrical about the good old days of stalwart playability. Tempest was originally released by Atari into the arcade, and it caused a bit of a storm being one of the first games to use vector graphics. Soon after, it made the transition onto all the major home computers knocking about in the early Eighties, and a few years ago established itself on the Jaguar.

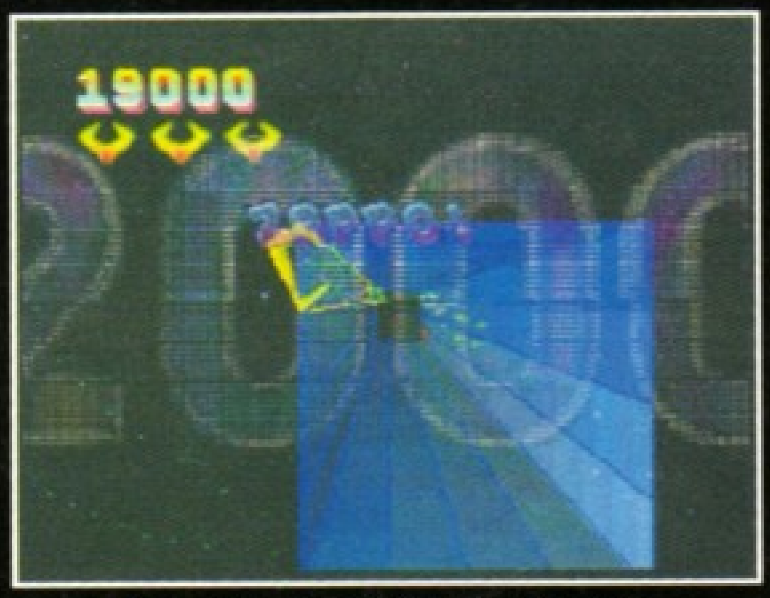
Now it's being released on the Saturn by Interplay, and it's almost identical to the original, and even comes with the update Tempest 2000 included. In terms of playability things are pretty simple, the player shooting at enemies along various lanes organised into geometric shapes. There's even the chance to take on an opponent in two-player mode. We'll have more on this next month if we can ever get Dave off the Saturn.



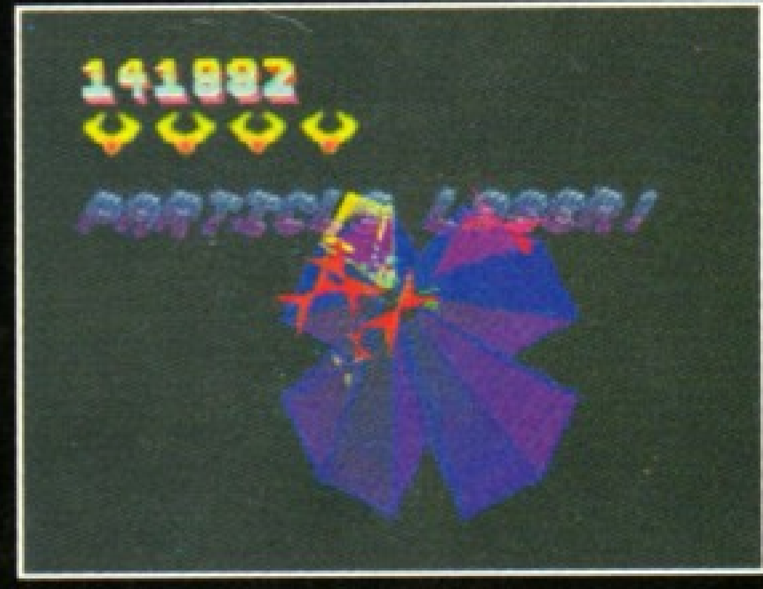
Jeff Minter coded this on the Jaguar...



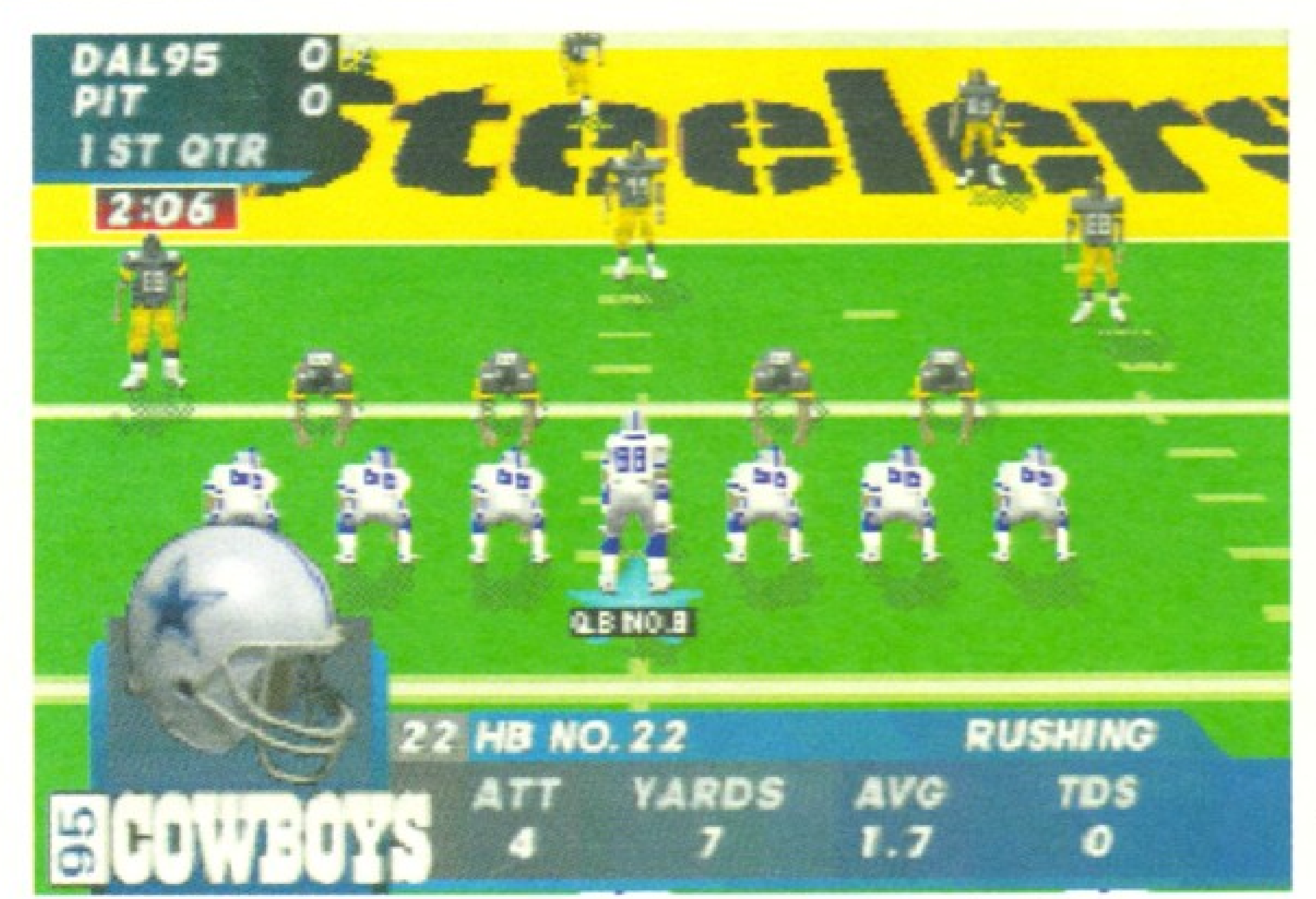
... It's the only reason to own the machine...



... And it's virtually identical on Saturn...



... And it's a brilliant game in its own right!



John Madden returns yet again. At least it's an all-new game this time, eh readers?

MADDEN ON SATURN

EA have pulled out the stops this month where sports sims are concerned. As well as PGA Tour Golf and NHL Hockey, they've also got John Maddens '97 for our perusal. Like its other two sports sims, this is due to be released in December. It features all of the elements that made the game so popular in the first place – all the teams, loads of play options, multi-player mode et al. The graphics are better than ever and it looks like the game has lost none of its addictive quality. It's also got a really smart intro sequence. As with NHL Hockey '97, we'll be bringing you a review next issue.





GRID RUN

Scream through 57 rounds of

BLOOD-PUMPING, HEART-POUNDING, MIND-BENDING

mazes in this sci-fi, hyper-speed chase. Grid Run will keep you guessing, gaming and going for hours.

"It's rather REFRESHING to find a game that relies on nothing but PURE GAMEPLAY... there really is nothing like it" - SEGA POWER

"Blindingly ADDICTIVE" - PLAYSTATION POWER

"The most ORIGINAL and ADDICTIVE 2-player game EVER" - SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE












KRAZY IVAN
Issue No. 61289
Code 34zx 38/5

About a year ago now, Psygnosis released a game on the PlayStation called Krazy Ivan. And like Psygnosis' other titles WipEout and Destruction Derby, it looked very impressive. Well now it's just turned up on the Saturn! Out of nowhere!

In the old days – like about seven or eight years ago – the Russians were the bona fide enemies of the Beloved Free West. Now of course they're great mates of ours because they've got a MacDonalds parked in the middle of Moscow. After all the fuss of the arms race who'd have thought the outcome of the Cold War would be a toss up between nuclear Armageddon or a 200 copeck Happy meal? What a funny old world it is. Ha Ha.

If there was a return to the old days, the sight of Krazy Ivan strapped into a mech-warrior would probably be enough to have Ronald Mac clowning his way back to Yanksville. Then again, we'd probably have Russian fast food instead – something like Burger Proletariat or Thank Stalin It's Fridays'. But fortunately for both East and West, all this is entirely hypothetical because what we're talking about here is a console game!

That's right! Seemingly out of nowhere up pops Krazy Ivan, another of the big Psygnosis titles that made a considerable splash on the PlayStation and has since been given the conversion treatment. If you're not familiar with the game it's a simple enough shoot 'em up. As the Ruskie, Krazy Ivan, you step into a huge robot-mech-warrior type thing and do battle across the globe against all the usual military hardware and a number of other military robots, equal if not bigger than you. To help you out you have a support team that pop up in FMV to keep you informed, and a vast supply of weapons.

Krazy Ivan got a bit of a mixed reception on the PlayStation, celebrated for its amazing graphics and damned for the somewhat easy gameplay. However, it was released about a year ago and since then Psygnosis have been responding to the various gripes and suggestions put forward by gameslings such as yourselves. What this means is that everything should be just about perfect in time for its arrival on the Saturn. We say should be because as usual in a Coming Soon we don't want to give too much away. The game's release in December however means we'll be scrutinising it intently in our review next issue. Bet you can't wait eh? Well, the game was originally scheduled for a March release - it's been brought forward especially!



Seemingly out of nowhere pops Krazy Ivan, another of the big Psygnosis titles that made a considerable splash on the PlayStation

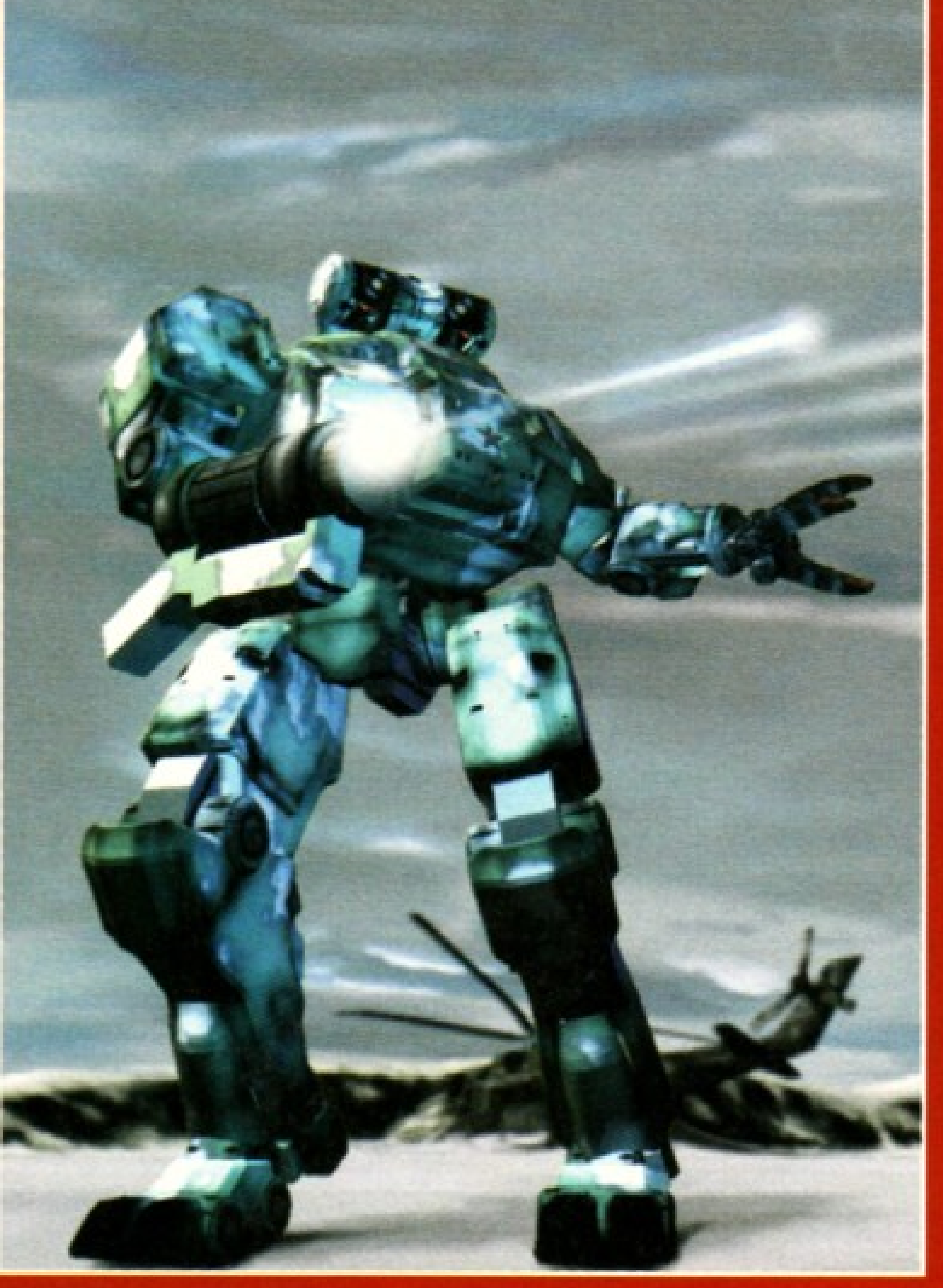








Krazy Ivan is yet another Saturn conversion from the stables of Perfect - a development house that has recently expanded after the success of previous Psygnosis translations, WipEout (not bad) and Destruction Derby (successful, but pretty rubbish).



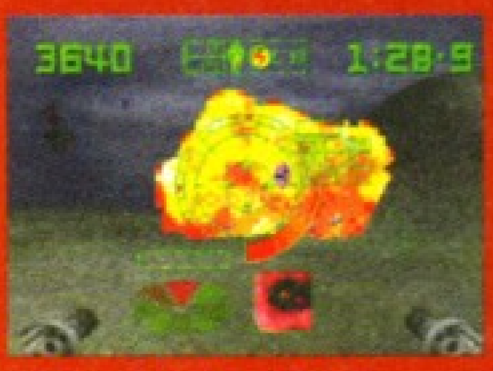
A couple more random shots of Saturn Krazy Ivan, taken from our now bulging archives. And they are impressive, are they not?











TO THE SOURCE

After you've successfully reduced the enemies on each stage to their basic components, another task lies ahead. The final mission objective is to destroy the main power source and thus ensure your enemies stand no chance of rebuilding their armies. A spinning wall protects the power core, but fortunately this pops up now and then leaving the core vulnerable to attack. Alternatively you can simply shoot at the wall itself until it is too weak to act as an adequate defence.

MAYDAY PARADE

Russians aren't stupid you know, and being actually quite sharp and on the ball, they realise that there's no point in having a mech-warrior without some weapons to do a little war with. As a result of this incisive foresight, your robot comes fitted out with the latest in state-of-the-art annihilation armoury. Here's a look at some of the goodies you can expect:

LASERS: Cast in a rather attractive purple hue, the laser is devastating, providing a continual blast as it does, but also somewhat short lived.

VORTEX BOMB: Despite its catchy name, the Vortex Bomb is a bomb plain and simple. You'll want to stand well back after throwing it because it's very powerful.

PLASMA CANNON: The Plasma Cannon is more lethal than the laser, firing short bursts of destructive energy. It's also trickier to use.

Z BEAM: The Z beam is perhaps the most impressive of your special weapons and best kept for use on either the energy shield or very tough enemies.

MISSILES: The good ole' humble missile will take care of your bog standard enemies. Unfortunately is has no homing facility which means you have to aim.

SCYTHE: This is an orange laser beam of sorts, its main advantage being the ability to self-target, something that makes it useful for pre-emptive strikes.



That's a definite "Boom!"



An explosion follows shortly...



Well, all right then, maybe not.



Get close and you can't miss.



Hmmmm. Another big explosion.





Krazy Ivan explodes spectacularly at the game's end.



Krazy Ivan specialises in the old fireworks department.

Psygnosis have converted across everything from the PlayStation original – even the frame rate – which can't be bad







A vast amount of pretty damn explosive Krazy Ivan action – all shots surrounding this caption are from the Saturn version. Psygnosis appear to have done a good job with the conversion eh?









Krazy Ivan fires upon an enemy target. It explodes in a very nice style. A pattern for many of these screenshots, it would seem.



FREE AT LAST!

As well as the simple satisfaction you'll get from seeing one of your mech enemies bite the dust, there's also the pride in freeing hostages. You see, because these warriors are huge, they also contain unfortunate soldiers who've been swallowed up. Just why they aren't fried to a cinder during the course of your battle is a bit of a mystery but it's quite nice all the same.





WASSERNAME?

FMV sequences, as we all know, have a habit of being a bit of a waste of time. They're usually littered with half-baked thesp types desperate for a break in the acting world. Krazy Ivan is unfortunately no exception, and while it looks pretty decent, the naff Russian accents that are evident in abundance are pretty unforgivable. The star-gazing among you will notice however, that it features a familiar face in the shape of that woman from the Glam Metal Detectives. She also turned up in Eastenders – you know, the pub singer with the hots for Nigel. Can't remember her name though. Write in and tell us what it is.

BLIMIN' MECH!

There are a total of five different combat areas in Krazy Ivan – Russia, Saudi Arabia, Japan, North America and France. As well as the usual assortment of ineffectual military hardware and infantry fodder, you'll also face more challenging opponents in the shape of other mech-warriors. There are three or four on each stage and they all possess their own unique shape and style, as well as a personalised arsenal. Here's a look at one from each stage:

RUSSIA – DEDLOK: Dave our illustrious art editor will love this particular mech-warrior because he's a bit like a gorilla. He lifts himself up onto his huge mechanical fist-type things and then shoots bolts out of his feet. There's no sign of bananas the size of submarines though. Shame.

SAUDI ARABIA – PROWL: Rather an unusual mechanoid this one. It moves about on all fours and resembles a tiger, right down to the orange and black stripes that coat its body. It also rejects firing missiles in favour of pouncing on any enemies making it quite difficult to target.

JAPAN – COLOSSUS: As his name suggests, Colossus is a huge robot, relying mainly on his bulk to attack opponents. One of the things to watch out for as far as this chap is concerned is the lowering of his head which means he's about to come a-ramming in your direction.

NORTH AMERICA – GRANITE: Granite resembles a jellyfish, what with its spindly retractable legs. It's very good at protecting itself by burying itself in the earth and firing energy blasts your way. The best thing to do with this chap is to find something convenient to hide behind and then shoot at it when it raises itself from the ground.

FRANCE – BUZZSAW: An insectoid mech-warrior this one, and pretty damn tough as well. It will happily fly about you bombing away making your job of targeting it that bit harder. It also has a penchant for punching to. But when you manage to destroy it the explosion is most satisfying.



As you can beheld from this quartet of screenshots...



... The range of Mechs you're up against in Krazy Ivan...



... Is pretty impressive. And the 3D modelling is well up to...



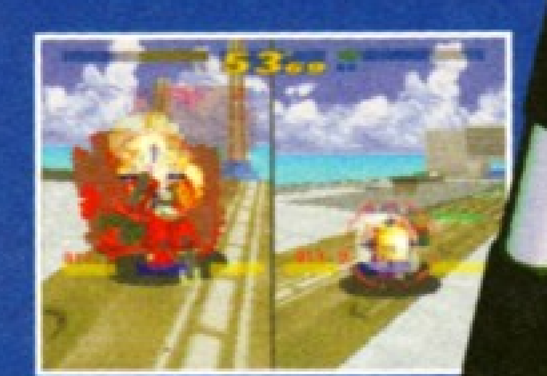
... Psygnosis' usual standards. Excellent stuff indeed.



The resolution's down from the arcade, it's not as smooth and some detail is missing. Despite this, Virtual On is still shaping up to be a conversion in the same class as Sega Rally or Fighting Vipers – ie ACE!







This month we take the lid off the various two-player modes available in Virtual On. As well as the Sega Rally style split-screen mode, there's also a vertical split, which is really rather splendid indeed.



Another month, another new version of Virtual On - the robot battling game that's shaping up to be an excessively good arcade conversion. Still what do you expect from AM3? For the latest details on this brilliant title, look no further!

In last month's lovely edition of SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE you were privileged enough to get the full lowdown on AM3's Virtual On, as it stood then. In its 40% complete stage, the game seemed pretty much complete in its one-player incarnation, with preliminary Saturn versions of all the arenas and robots included. AM3's biggest aim was to incorporate all of the gameplay from the coin-op, and even at this early stage, they had accomplished that wonderfully. And that's at the 40% complete stage!

So what now? With a great conversion already in the bag, where do the conversion team go from now? Well, all Virtual On arcade units are two-player, and it's in this area of the game that the team are now concentrating their efforts.

In the last version of the game, a two-player mode was evident (a split-screen affair similar to Rally), but the team have now gone into overdrive. It is now confirmed that a NetLink mode is being included for use with the new modem/Internet package, and AM3 are not ruling out the possibility of compatibility with the link-up cable.

Most people though, are going to be making use of the split-screen two-player mode, and in this regard AM3 have not let their fans down. The Rally-style horizontal split-screen is good, but the latest version of the game includes a vertical split, which in our opinion is even better!

As we have said in the past, Virtual On remains a top priority project in Japan, where the original coin-op is a lot more common and indeed more popular than many other games. The Japanese Sega Saturn Magazine's Reader's Most Wanted Page actually had Virtual On higher than Fighting Vipers for many months!

You can't really fault the work of the team - although the game has a slightly rougher look than the Model 2 original, the overall effect is uncannily similar to the arcade game. Although it's not as smooth (like Rally, the frame rate has come down from 60 frames per second to 30), it's still great, and as a game concept, there's nothing on Saturn to touch Virtual On!

We should be stepping up the V On coverage in the next couple of issues, leading up to the review (which should hopefully be in the issue after next). Stay with us!



This is a great pic of the horizontal split-screen mode. The top robot is firing off his mega plasma blast (those four little blobs) which rams home on player two (bottom).

All Virtual On arcade units are two-player and it's in this area of the game that the team are concentrating their efforts.

VIRTUAL ON INTERVIEW

As promised, here's the full monty on the much vaunted Virtual On inquisition. Our Japan Editor, Warren Harrod, visited AM3 and talked at length with Mr JUNO WATARI, Producer at AM R&D Dept #3, who is supervising the CS R&D Team's conversion. For full detailage of the Virtual On development, read on...

SSM What were your first thoughts when you started to convert Virtual On to the Saturn?

JW The arcade version of Virtual On is using two Model 2 boards. Only in this way were we finally able to get the game up and running. Because of that there were a lot of misgivings as to whether or not it could be converted to the Saturn properly.

SSM What were your main aims for converting Virtual On to the Saturn?

JW When all is said and done, because it is using two Model 2 boards this game is working fairly hard. So we thought that trying to convert it to the Saturn, keeping everything at that level of quality, was impossible. In particular because of the problem of the resolution. The arcade version is running at a resolution of 24K but as you'd expect on the Saturn the screen looks a little coarse doesn't it? For this part of the conversion, no matter what you do, there's no way around it so it can't be helped. However, the feeling of the game is very good and in that respect it's a perfect conversion. Visually it's come down a little but we're working to maintain the game's overall quality.

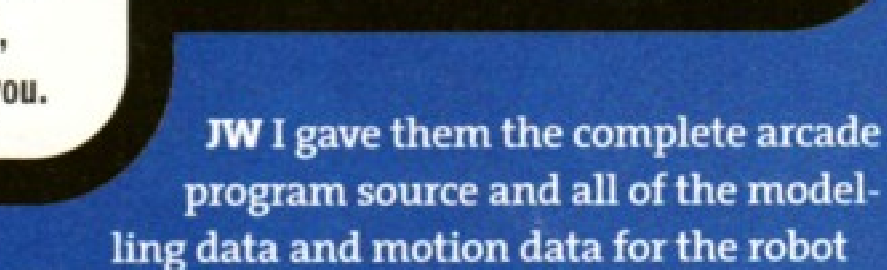
SSM How did you retain the detail and speed of the arcade 3D graphics in the Saturn Virtual On?

JW Basically, it was very tough! There was no perfect solution. By transferring the source [program data] and rendered source [graphics data] bit by bit we've just about managed to get to where we are now.

SSM Did you use SGL 2.1?

JW No we didn't, we're using our own program.

SSM What assistance did you receive from the AM3 arcade team?



Ever wondered what Sega of Japan's R&D headquarters looked like? Well, here's a picture for you.

JW I gave them the complete arcade program source and all of the modelling data and motion data for the robot characters. Everything was handed over to them.

SSM Were you able to use any of the arcade program (for example, algorithms) for the game-logic or has the game been completely rewritten for Saturn Virtual On?

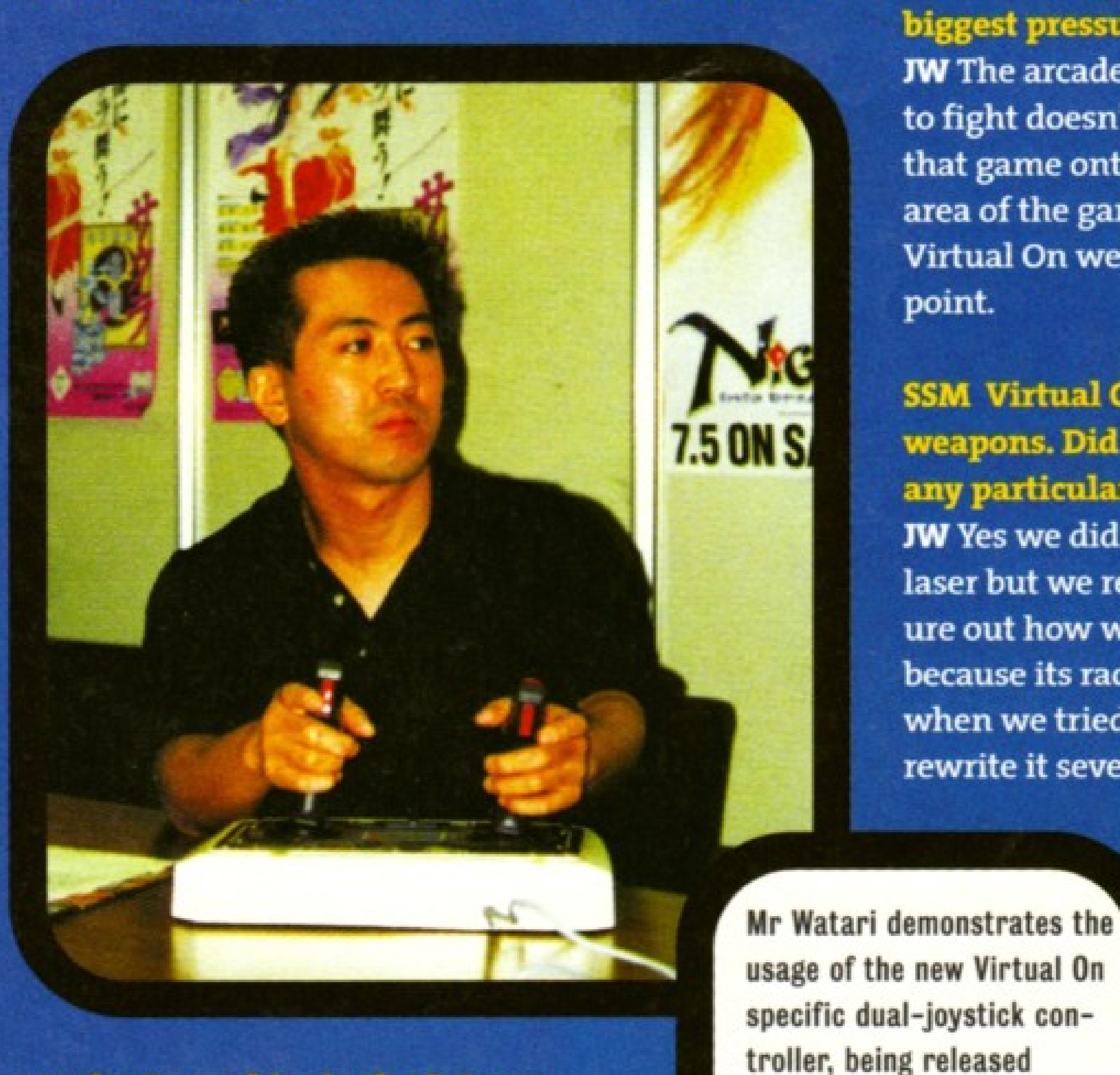
JW It wasn't possible to use it 100% but generally speaking it was fine.

SSM Which part of the conversion is putting the biggest pressure of the team?

JW The arcade version of the game uses two screens to fight doesn't it? Currently, we're trying to squeeze that game onto one screen. In order not to make this area of the gameplay unsuitable for the Saturn Virtual On we're taking great pains. That's the main point.

SSM Virtual On has some very spectacular weapons. Did you have any difficulty in converting any particular robot or weapon to the Saturn?

JW Yes we did. For example, the robot Daiden fires a laser but we really had our work cut out trying to figure out how we were going to represent the laser because its radius is so big. At first there was a delay when we tried to draw it on the screen so we had to rewrite it several times.



Mr Watari demonstrates the usage of the new Virtual On specific dual-joystick controller, being released simultaneously with the game in Japan.

SSM What difficulties were there in converting the various scenery to the Saturn? How did you overcome these difficulties?

JW In the arcade version all the background scenery is represented as polygons. Each part of it is modelled. However, in the case of the Saturn, it just doesn't have the capability to display that many polygons so with regards to the scenery it became a scrolled image. At the time we were changing the scenery to the scrolled version we had a lot of worry that there might be a sense of incompatibility.

SSM The game looks very close to the original arcade version. Were any compromises needed in >>



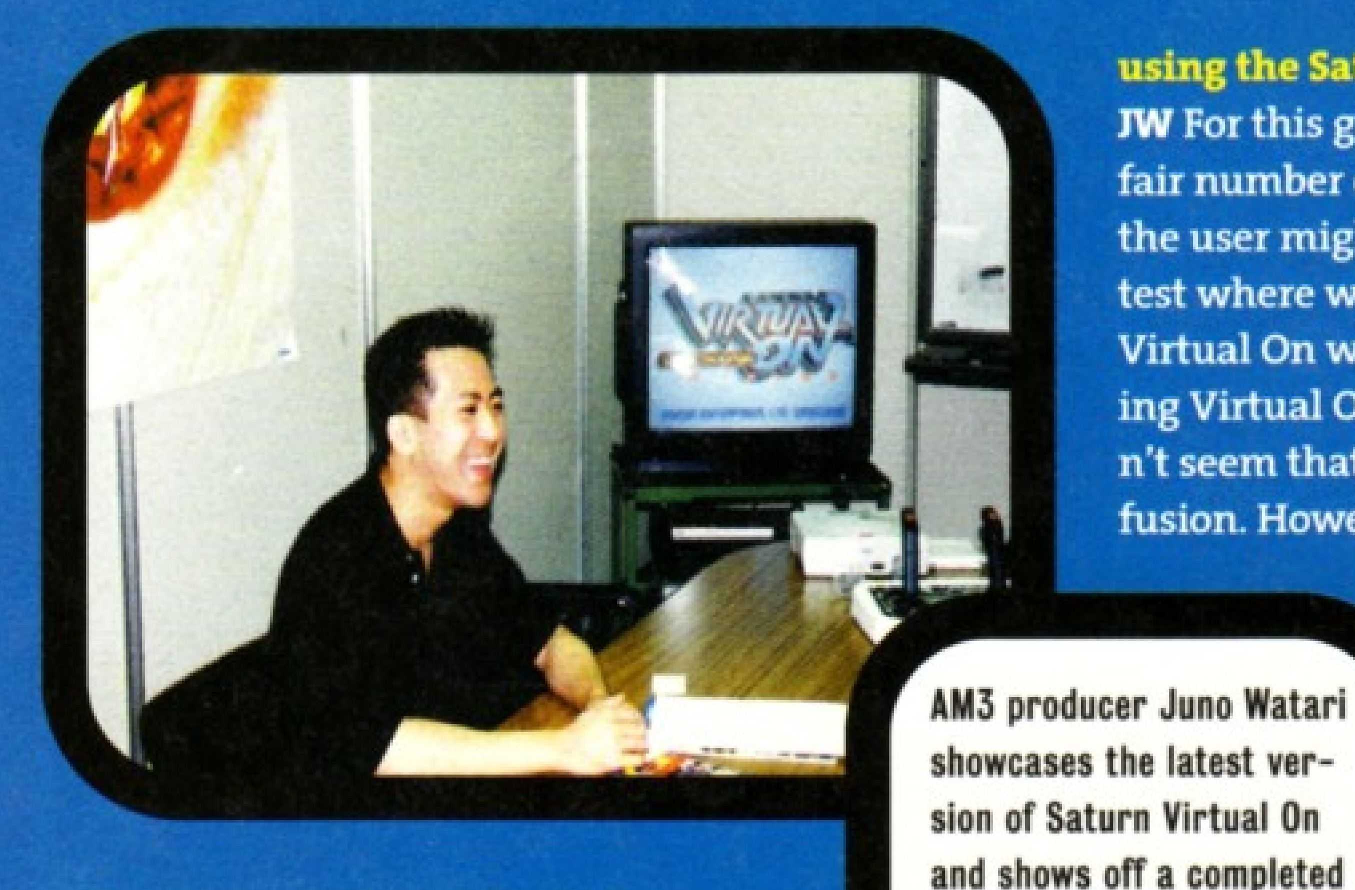
Yet more intense two-player action. The robots are a tad far off here.



You get the winning and losing poses on the two-player screens. Lovely eh?



Despite the increased carnage, Saturn Virtual On never seems to slow down in two-player mode.



AM3 producer Juno Watari showcases the latest version of Saturn Virtual On and shows off a completed Dual Joystick.

>> order to covert Virtual On to the Saturn?
JW With regards to the feeling of the game then there were no compromises at all. We really worked hard on that.

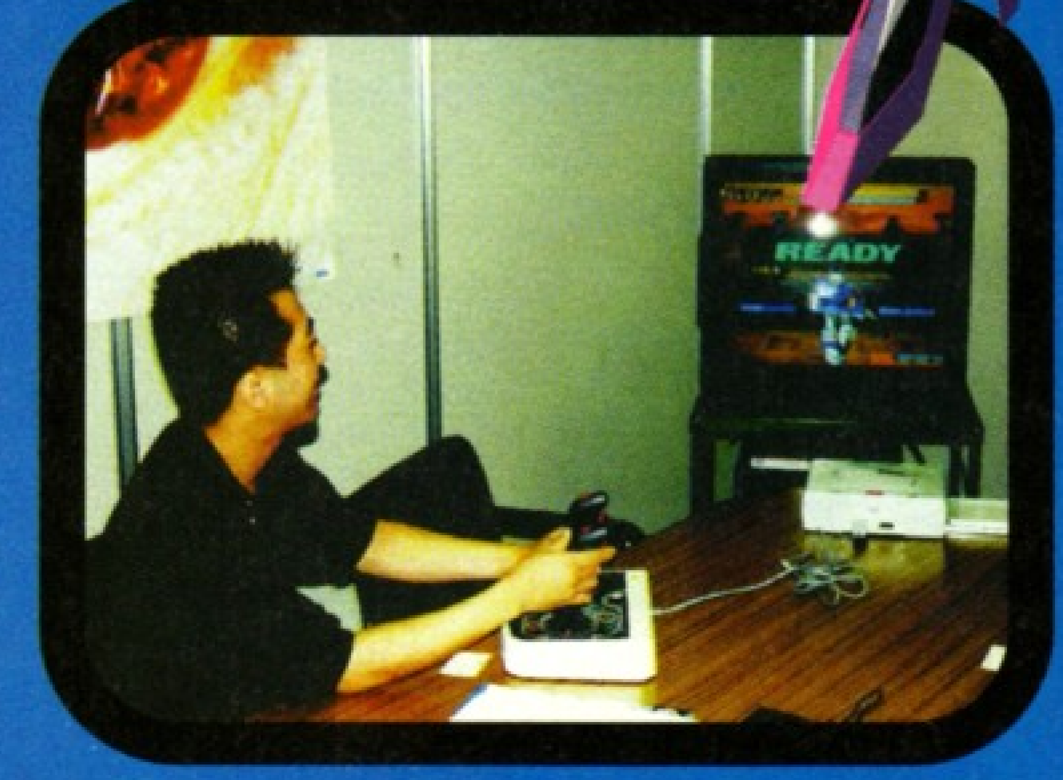
SSM The two-player mode is obviously one of the most important aspects of Virtual On. What types of two-player mode are you planning to include?
JW We plan to have two kinds of split screen mode. Both a left/right split screen and an up/down split screen.

SSM The split-screen mode is obviously the most important to our readers. Since the graphics and game logic are effectively being processed twice as much, are you able to keep the same speed and detail in the game?
JW Pretty much so. I think we have.

SSM Are you planning to use the link-up cable for the Saturn Virtual On?
JW Tentatively, we have a plan but we haven't decided when or in what way it will be implemented yet.

SSM Please tell us about the development of the new dual joystick Virtual On controller?
JW For the arcade version you can do all the operations with this lever. So, from the viewpoint of this conversion's character, you'd expect the need for the players to play the game with the same kind of interface. The origin of its development was in response to that.

SSM What disadvantages are there in using the ordinary joypad compared to using the Saturn Virtual On controller?
JW For this game it's necessary to have to press a fair number of buttons so there's a possibility that the user might become a little confused. We did a test where we watched various people playing Virtual On with a pad. For those people playing Virtual On for the very first time it didn't seem that there was any feeling of confusion. However, for those few who had already become accustomed to the arcade controller, using the pad felt a little strange. So, for those users playing Virtual On for the first time there shouldn't be any particular be feeling of confusion.



SSM Can you use the NiGHTS analogue controller with the Saturn version of Virtual On?
JW No, you can't. The original Virtual On used a digital input so it's not compatible at all with an analogue system.

SSM What plans are there for extra modes in the Saturn Virtual On? For example, are there any new hidden robots?
JW We plan to include some interesting things into the Saturn version. The possibility for having robots that weren't in the arcade version is there.

SSM Considering the size and complexity of Saturn Virtual On, which aspects of the game are you most proud of, and why?
JW From the point of view of actually creating it, Virtual On was an extremely troublesome game. The typical Virtua Fighter like fighting game just has two fighters trading blows and that's all there is to it. However, with Virtual On you can be far apart and still be able to shoot at each other. In addition, the field of play has a high level of freedom within a wide area so just how you go about completing the game is very difficult. The maximum number of shots fired from a single weapon is 32, but with two screens that becomes 64 shots flying around. Each shot's range and homing capabilities etcetera is created separately for each one. So for each shot we are calculating whether or not it hits the enemy, the floor, an obstacle or goes outside the field. While we're doing all of that we are also calculating their flight path. And all this is done while the game is being played so there's an incredible burden on the CPU. If you consider those 64 shots hitting one big wall and then try to determine the outcome, the total number of possible combinations all together is about 40,000. Working out those possible combinations was an extremely troublesome matter.

SSM What percentage complete is it at the moment?
JW At the moment about 70%.

SSM Will other games be able to use the new controller?
JW Basically, I don't know but I think they will. However, I can't say what those titles are.



At close range, the robots switch to plasma swords, which inflict huge amounts of damage.



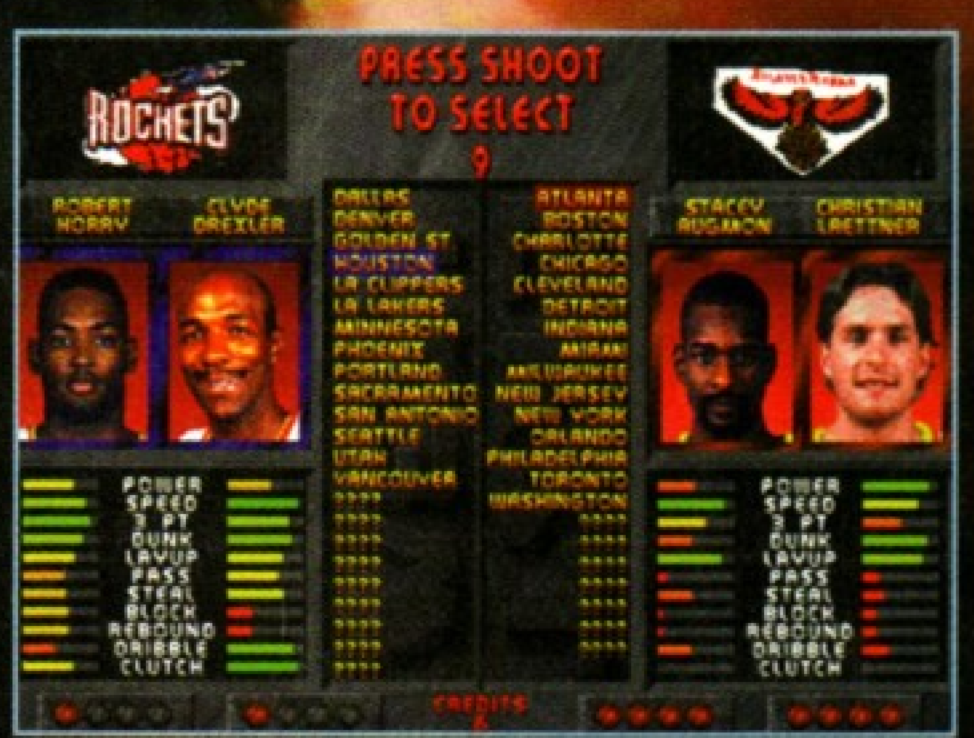


A vast array of Virtual On carnage in these five action-packed pictures. Except for the centre one which shows one of the robot's winning poses.



Hold on to your shorts little man.......
here's your chance to play with the Big boys!









Hold on to your shorts little man - this is your chance to play with the big boys! NBA Jam Extreme takes Basket Ball to new heights, featuring ballistic graphics and ultra-addictive gameplay. Full 3D rotoscoping makes our 170 NBA superstars look prettier than the originals and now there's even more control from a range of killer 'Extreme' moves. You also get to eat clouds more than ever with an even wilder selection of anti-gravity, out-to-lunch monster dunks! Boomshakalaka! Don't look down!













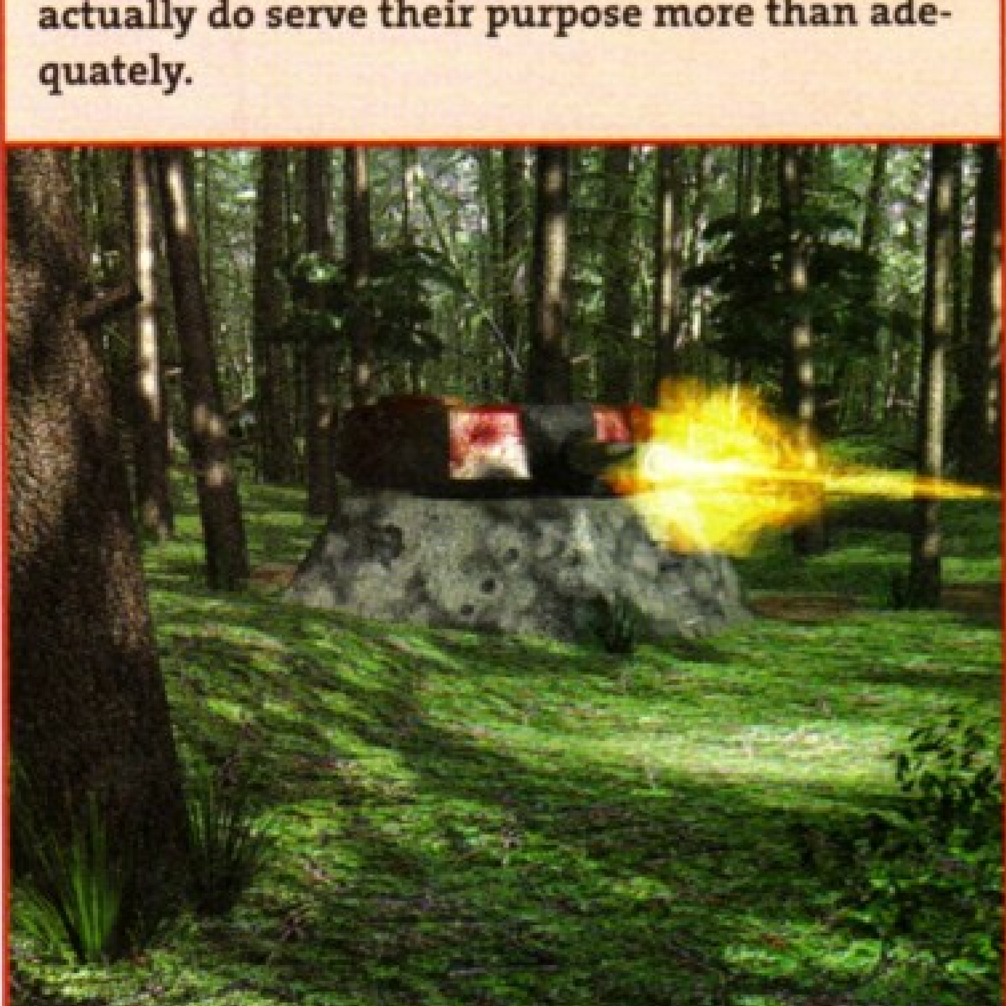
COMMAND & CONQUER

Command & Conquer is one of the best-selling PC titles ever - and that's including Skunny Kart. Find out what all the fuss is about with the they-said-it-couldn't-be-done Saturn conversion from Virgin.

BY	VIRGIN
PRICE	TBA
STYLE	COMMANDING & CONQUERING
RELEASE	DECEMBER

HI! I'M COLONEL CARPETBOMB!

Command and Conquer looks nice enough, but let's face it, the graphics aren't going to give Panzer Dragoon any sleepless nights. If it slept. But that's all part of the plan readers, because this means the space saved on the CD can be put to other uses – like saving loads of rendered cut-scenes to break up the gameplay! They're absolutely ace looking and there are hordes of them. Unlike many games which utilise this device, the intermissions in C&C actually do serve their purpose more than adequately.





"...And here's what I look like with my wig on my chin! Ha ha!"



An explosion rocks a building. Yo. Rock the house. I believe.

I Since the dawn of time it has been Man's ambition to rule all he surveys. Well, perhaps not. At the dawn of time, it was probably man's ambition to evolve fingers. And bottle openers. In fact, it probably took quite a while for man to get around to having an auspicious ambition like conquest on his mind. Sometime after the ambition to have a mind, in fact.

However, suffice is to say that at some point it did become man's ambition to rule all he surveys, and man has been blowing himself up to that end ever since. Obviously, as millions of peaceniks and other layabouts have attested, this is a pretty bad thing, and it would be better for everyone all round if we could find a way to curb these territorial tendencies. Well Virgin think there's a better way. They reckon that if we all bought Command and Conquer for our games systems we could be as warlike as we like without causing anybody real physical harm. We could all just sit indoors and play at war with Command and Conquer until we've all eventually forgotten how to make bombs anyway. Well, they haven't actually said that's what they think, but it's what we think they might think.

The futurist environment in which Command and Conquer is set pitches two well-armed sides against one another. In the blue corner is the UN Global Defence force, and in the red corner is the evil criminal supergroup The Brotherhood. One is intent on taking over the world for its own gain, whereas the other is intent on taking over the world for its own gain. And, in an unprecedented twist to the usual wargame format, you're allowed to play as either the heroes or the villains – so if you've ever had

In the blue corner is the UN Global Defence Force, and in the red corner is the criminal supergroup The Brotherhood....



That's something of a large ruck occurring in the above pic. Not that you can tell that because the sprites are small.

All those tiny things you can barely see in the screenshots are the active elements of C&C. Soldiers, tanks and so on. You know the stuff. Anyway, they kill each other.



Oh the drama. The full pathos of C&C is displayed here.





The tinyness of Command & Conquer's graphics shouldn't put you off. After all, your telly is loads bigger than one of these screenshots. And it hasn't stopped PC owners from buying lots of copies. They are small though. Only wee.

a dream to rule the planet with a dread fist and enforce a reign of terror this is the game for you. Whoever you choose to play you're given a differing selection of weapons and technology. So it's like two games in one. Nearly.

The game itself, possible future saviour of the souls of our race, takes a ground-level look at mass conflict, by including a Sim City-style construction element along with the full-scale massacre. This brings home the, like, futility of war, man, because you spend ages building up your little combat economy only to see it ravaged and destroyed by your foes. Alternatively, you can use your factories to roll out thousands of tanks and use them to crush all civilisation in your path. It all depends.

Command and Conquer has been out on the PC for some time now (since August last year, in fact) and it received crazy good reviews on that format – especially impressive when you consider the amount of competition in the genre on that format. We know for sure that you Saturn owners are hankering after a conversion, as we've had numerous letters sent in to Q&A requesting information on the possibility. Well as you may have guessed by this copious preview stuffed with Saturn shots, C&C is indeed heading for the Sega machine, and it'll be with you shortly. Just as soon as it's had its tea.



More Lilliputian combat aptly depicted.



Another micro-barney breaks out in C&C world.



Give orders with a small cursor! That's the name of the game.





These shots cunningly juxtapose the mechanical benignness of the first pic with the automated destruction in the second.

One is intent on taking over the world **for its own gain,** the other is intent on taking over the world **for its own gain...**







This is quite an exciting bit from the second level, actually. You have to use an advance party to knock out some enemy defences, then a party of weak engineers need guiding into the opposing buildings to change them to your side. It's dead good.

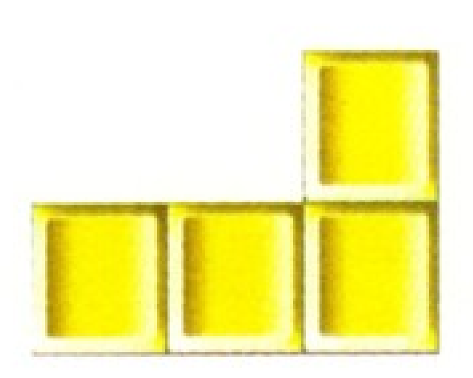
The loud Japanese video currently playing in the office is doing my head in. Turn down.

COME TO LOVELY WAR!

If you want to go to war, you'll need to plan ahead. It's a case of your primary, secondary and tertiary industries, innit? You've got your primary element, raw materials, which means you've got to mine all the things you require for your secondaries – manufacturing. This means building and making things. And then, once you've got everything together, you can move into your tertiary – or service – industry, by providing a free euthanasia service to your enemies. So don't go expecting a simple game of mass levelling for morons.







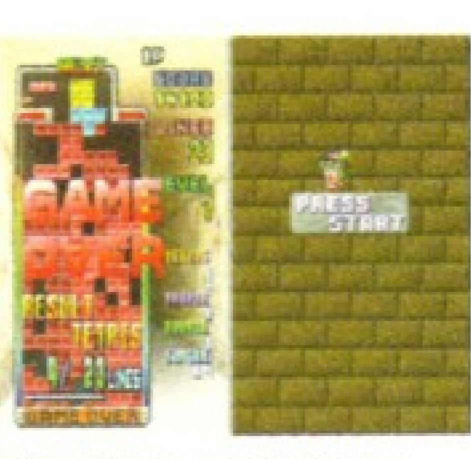
TETRIS PLUS

Who'd have thought that a game where you attach blocks to make lines which disappear to earn you points would have had quite the impact it has? Well someone obviously, otherwise they wouldn't have invented it and we wouldn't still be playing it! Sharoo!

BY	SEGA
PRICE	£TBA
STYLE	PUZZLE
RELEASE	DECEMBER







If the blocks reach the top then your game is over buddy!

THE STORY OF THE BLOCKS

Puzzle games are known for their lax story lines. Fair enough, it's pretty tricky to marry a succession of coloured blocks with a coherent plot, but most titles don't even try. Tetris Plus isn't very different. Whilst there's an excellent explanation for the travels and travails of our heroes (they're looking for treasure in the old world), each actual episode starts with the same routine. Which is, predictably, "Oh no, how are we going to get past those blocks?". Still, at least they've made an effort. And it's all quite funny. And very well presented. You never know, the finished version might expand upon this principle.



TAKE IT TO THE SEVENTH LEVEL

Level editors in games are always scary things which you'd think are really really complex. Not so with Tetris Plus. The levels editor is simplicity itself. Simply place one square block at a time until the screen is how you want it (you can use a full palette of colours, too). Then set the height for the whirling rotary blade (the lower it is the less time you have). Position the Prof, select your first block to drop and you're away. Don't forget to save your screens, though, or there'll be tears before bedtime.



It's been around four years, and it's still widely acclaimed by everyone in the world to be one of the greatest puzzles ever. More popular than chess, more challenging than Operation, easier to understand than backgammon and more colourful than Twister. That's Tetris. The game which netted its Soviet creator a brand new 486 PC and made millions for the state. No games library is complete without the block-matching option which is Tetris, or one of its many clones.

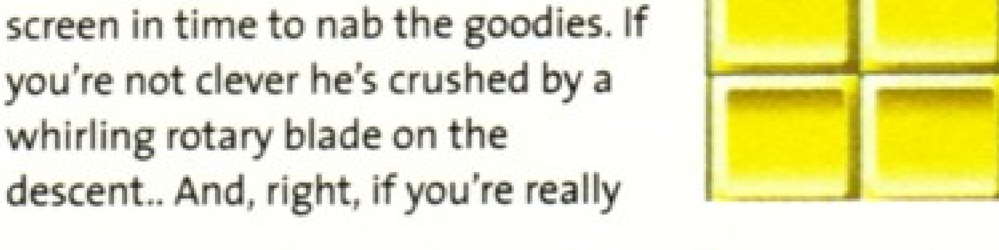
The latest version, slated for a Saturn appearance, has to be the coolest incarnation yet. Along with the classic Tetris game, there's also a stack of brand new playing options featuring two new Tetris characters. You see, Tetris is no longer the abstract game of shape matching – it's the story of the adventures of the scatty Professor and his tomboy assistant. The jovial pair are off around the world hunting for buried treasures, and the only things standing in their way are lots of blocks. These blocks present themselves in various strange shapes and layouts, whilst the Prof stalks along their lengths. Drop a falling block on top of him and he'll climb it (dangerous). Make a gap and he'll fall through it (good). If you're clever you can solve the block puzzles which allow the little man to reach the bottom of the screen in time to nab the goodies. If you're not clever he's crushed by a whirling rotary blade on the descent.. And, right, if you're really clever you can even design your very own Tetris puzzle levels. So the message here is be clever. Anyway, the level editor is a smart new addition to the game which enables you to try and outwit yourself. So you'd better hope you're not some kind of twisted and nefarious genius or you'll spend years cursing your own evil machinations. Of course, the real fun lies in testing your mates with your bizarre puzzles to which only you know the true solution.

Obviously there are now loads and loads of puzzle games with the descending-objects theme. Tetris Plus, though, does actually introduce some new play elements to the mix. At first having the Professor wandering around your bricks just seems like a novelty, but it's actually the key to the Tetris Plus system. Once you get used to the little fella's blunderings it's a piece of cake to work out the thinking behind most of the set puzzles.

If this isn't enough for you, there's also a two -player mode (in both original and enhanced versions). As usual in Tetris land it's a head-to-head contest to save the Prof (or fill your foes screen) first, with high scores handicapping you opponent.

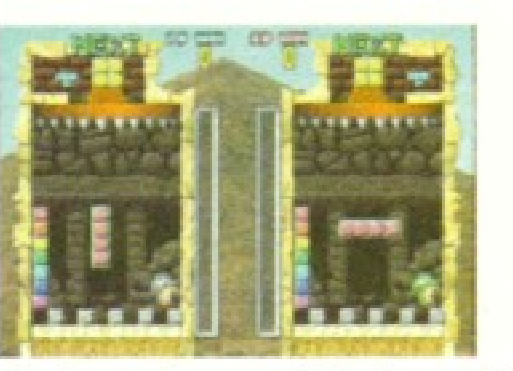
All in all, Tetris Plus looks to be one of the most colourful and well-presented puzzle games we've seen on the Saturn – and it's definitely the one with the most options. Hopefully we'll review a finished copy next month.





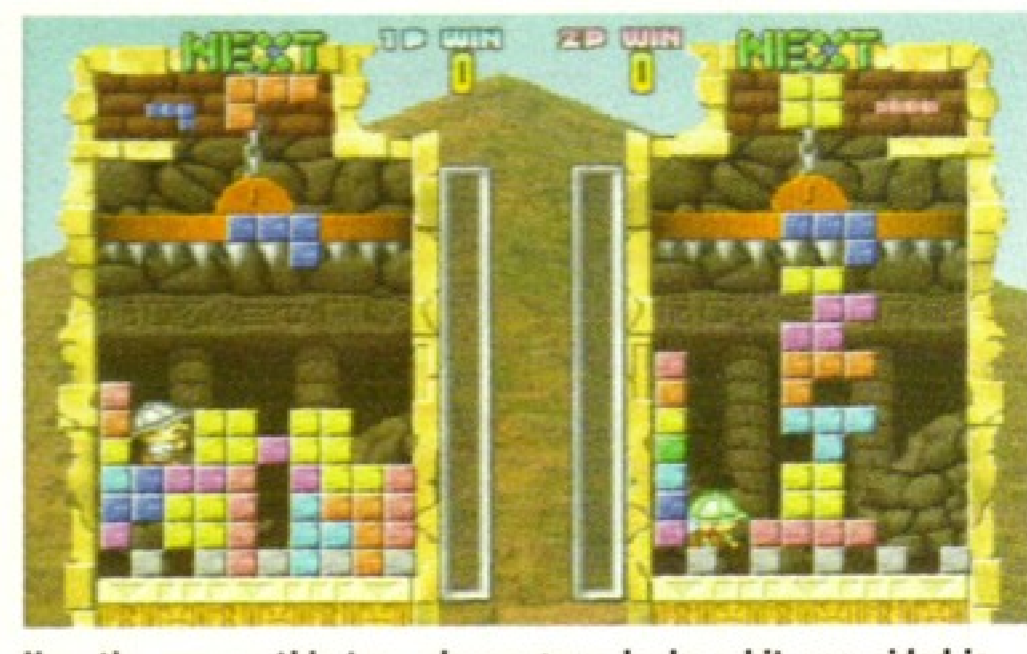








Blocks we love you! Blocks we do! Blocks you're great! Sharoo!!



Now the reason this two-player game looks a bit one-sided is that there was only one of us doing the screenshots. Geniuses among you might be able to play two games at once but not us.

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MIGHTY HITS

So you don't know what to do with your Virtua Gun? You've finished Virtua Cop a hundred times, and since then your little brother has since commandeered it. Well get it back for Mighty Hits!

BY	SEGA
PRICE	TBA
STYLE	SHOOTING
RELEASE	DECEMBER





Mighty Hits might sound like the name of a cheap mail-order-only Telstar compilation featuring classic tracks by Mr Mister, John Farnam and Mike and the Mechanics, but you can rest easy because there isn't a power ballad in sight. The title in this instance means hits from a gun – the Virtua gun to be precise. And the 'mighty' probably comes from the fact that there's about twenty odd individual games to choose from in this one package. You see, Sega in their infinite wisdom realise that owners of the gun might be feeling a bit jaded about the fact that they can only use it for Virtua Cop (or Chaos Control if you're desperate enough) and so decided to release Mighty Hits to assuage some of your frustration. What great guys eh?

Each of the games follows a pretty simple concept, and there's a distinct Japanese style to the proceedings. The great thing is that two players can compete against each other meaning there's plenty of opportunity to claim your right to the Dirty harry legacy. The other good thing is that Mighty Hits is going to be a bit of a bargain, retailing at a fairly modest £29.99. Whether it's worth the money we'll let you know next month in the review. For now though, let's take a look at some of these crazy shoot 'em up attractions.

Sega in their infinite wisdom realise that owners of the gun might be feeling a bit jaded about the fact that they can only use it for Virtua Cop...

RAFTED

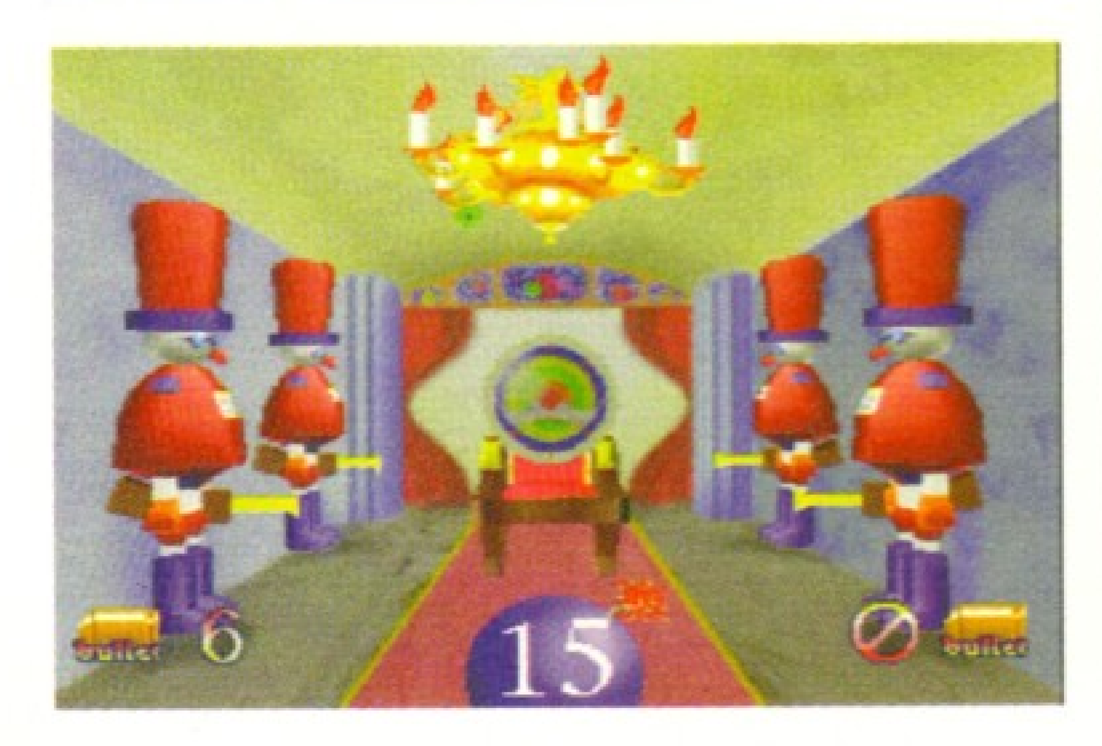
This is one of the coolest games we've seen so far in Mighty Hits. The aim is quite straightforward really. A man is gradually descending into the sea with a bunch of balloons in each hand. In front of him floats a raft. In order to land him safely on it, the player has to shoot the balloons in his left and right hands to steer him in. Fail and the poor chap drowns!









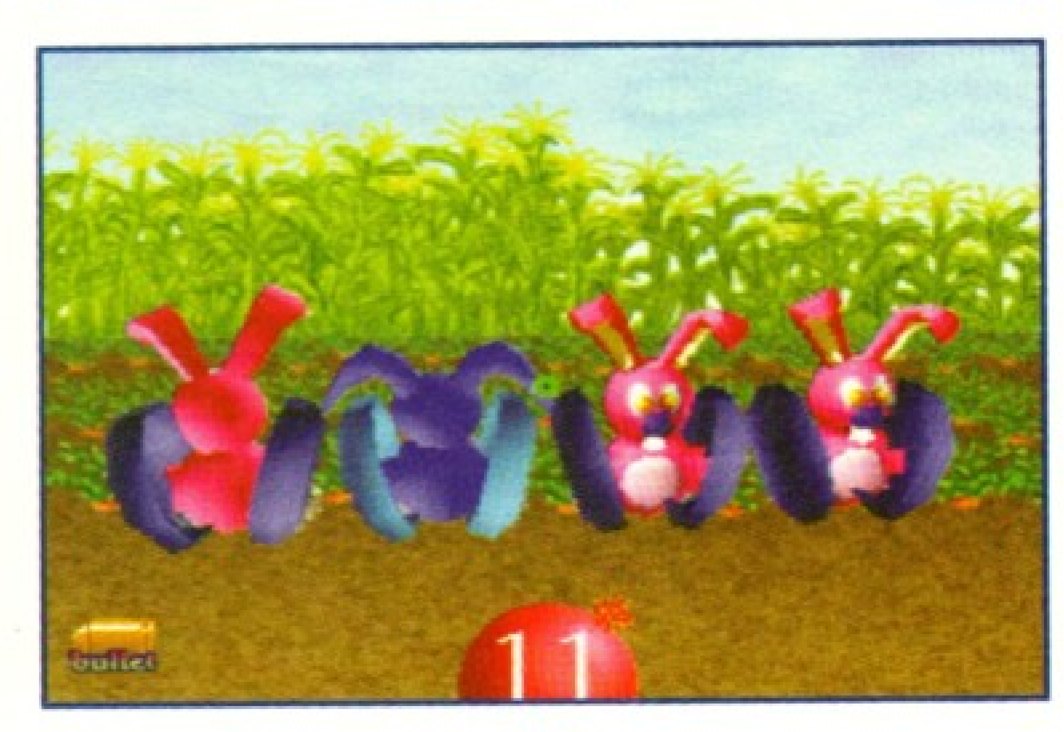


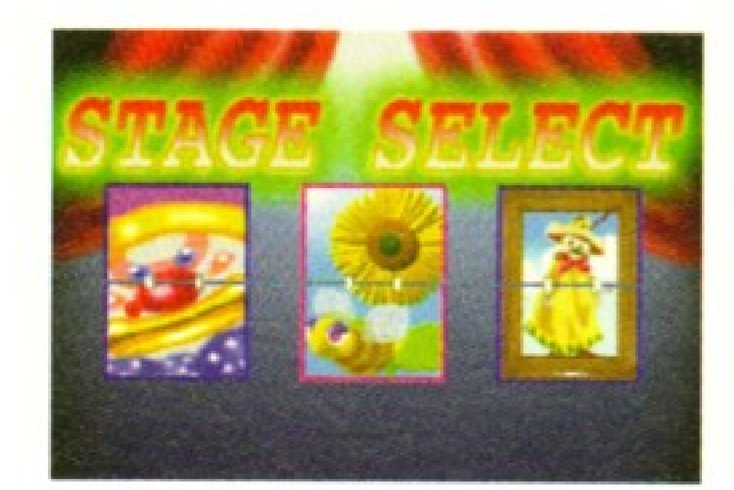
THE BLUE RABBIT

A mixture of concentration and accuracy here. It's a bit like that trick with the three cups and the sponge ball where the cups are shuffled and you have to guess where the ball's gone. Instead of that one of four rabbits is singled out as blue. That then disappears when the rabbits shuffle themselves about. The player then has to shoot the rabbit they think was blue.









Shoot at the stage select as it flips through the myriad of games.



This is the two-player version of the portrait game. Most confusing.



Sometimes you win and sometimes you lose, but you gotta keep on shooting.

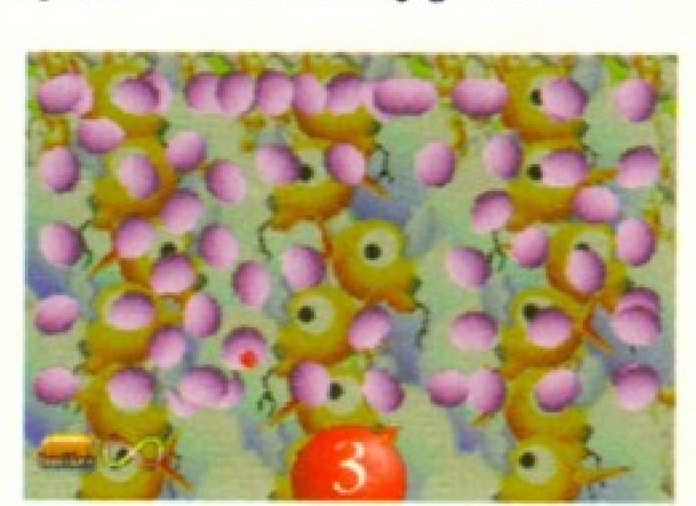
Each of the games follows a pretty simple concept, and there's a distinct Japanese style to the proceedings.



Why does it have to be Jack in any particular box eh? Why not Gideon, or Humphry? And why a box? What about a jug or tin or...







JACK IN THE BOX

Pretty damn easy this one. A whole bunch of jack in the boxes are arranged on the screen and the player shoots them as they pop up and down. This game is good for working on your ability to react quickly and accurately.



SUNFLOWER AND BEE

This game seems a bit baffling at first. Three sunflowers are lined up, their heads and leaves rotating when you hit them. This doesn't really seem to make much sense until a bee turns up on the scene and then it's a matter of shooting at it as it buzzes about the flowers.

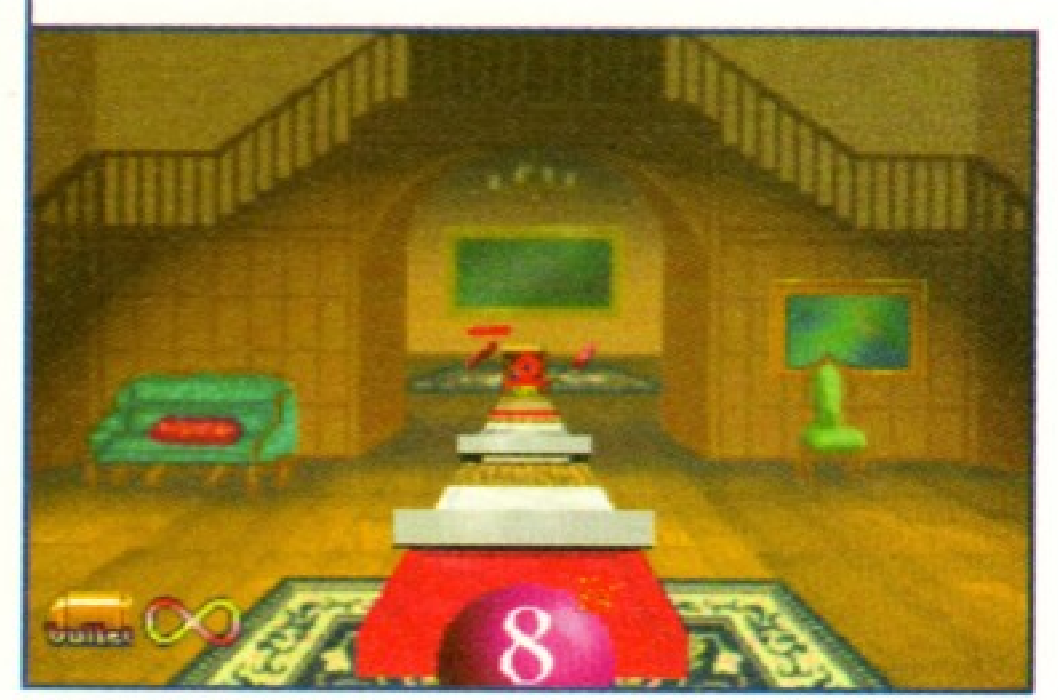




PORTRAITS

Of all the games in Mighty Hits this one is the most unfathomable. A row of portraits are lined up disappearing into the distance. So far all we've done is shoot them all down which is pretty easy anyway, but doing this doesn't mean you win. 'Intriguing' as Rich might say.





MICE TRAINS

Bit of an unusual one this. Rather than doing what bullets traditionally do – move very fast in a straight line – the player has to land their bullets in cups situated on top of a toy mouse train. You earn more points for landing the balls in the little cups rather than the big cups.



BOTTLES

There are some things about this bottle game that appear a bit strange, although we're pretty sure that the idea is to shoot all the corks off the bottles without shooting any of the bottles. Of course, it's much more fun to shoot the bottles so i suppose it's up to you.





THE INCREDIBLE HULK: THE

He's big! He's green! And my word is he mean! It's the Incredible Hulk, and he's not a happy fella because if he was a happy fella this game would be called 'Bruce Banner: No Saga'.

BY	EIDOS
PRICE	TBA
STYLE	PLATFORM
RELEASE	DECEMBER







In the opening part of the game the Hulk does battle with the Pantheon team who actually turn out to be his chums.



It's a shame that Bruce Banner never came across a band of wandering Hare Krishna's on his travels. They'd soon sort out all that bad karma following him about, and he'd learn how to transform his anger into love and stuff by thinking about nice things like flowers. Then again, if they didn't, you'd have a band of bald men in dresses on the run from a muscle-bound maniac sporting a green tan. Actually that might make for an interesting game. Something like 'Hulk and the Hare's: The Karma Saga'.

Unfortunately, Incredible Hulk: The Pantheon Saga doesn't feature any Hare Krishna's. What it does have though is good old Hulk himself, a man whose idea of looking back in anger always involves a simultaneous need to buy new clothes. He's not the only Marvel character in the game either. After collecting a calling card for fulfiling the hidden objectives on each level, the Hulk can call on some of his Pantheon chums like Ajax, Ulysses,

FADE TO BLACK

One thing you're probably wandering having looked at the screenshots is what all that darkness in the background is all about. this is a technique that programmers use as an alternative to having things in the 3D backdrop suddenly pop up or disappear. Rather than a fade into black, some programmers choose to use a kind of fog or mist technique. The problem with The Incredible Hulk at the moment though is that there's just too much blackness, often taking up almost half the screen. The game is still only about 50% complete, so lets hope they work that problem out before it's made review material.



THE INCREDIBLE SULK

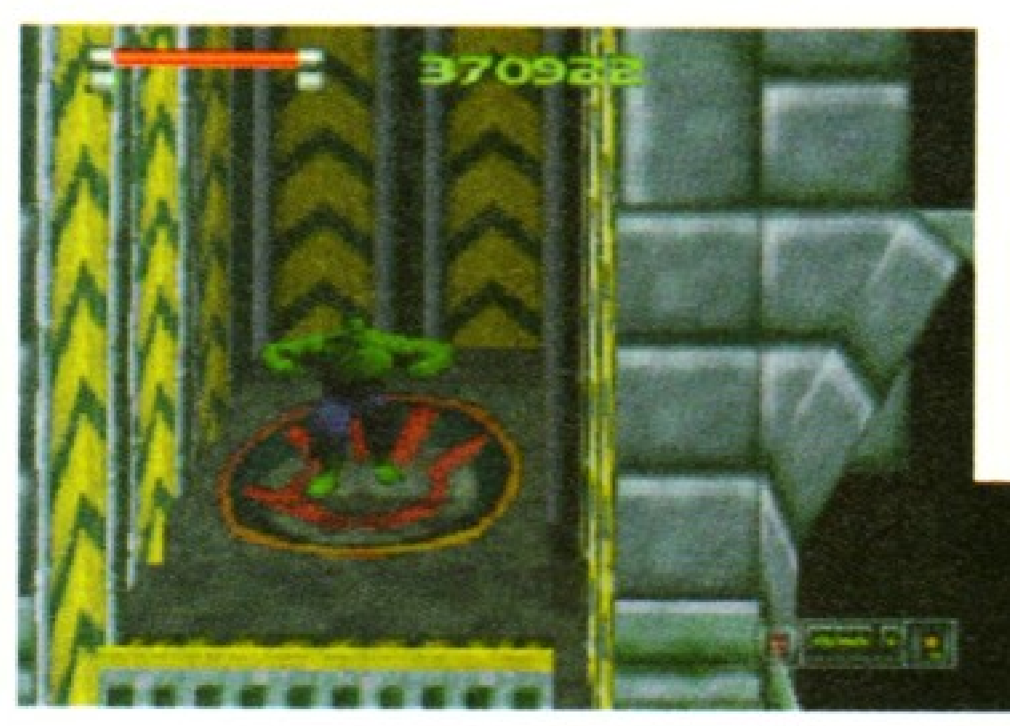
Cutting the huge figure he does, you'd think the Hulk was always up for a bit of hand to hand combat, a manly wrestle or a cheeky grapple. But as it is, most of the Hulk's attacks don't involve any contact at all. Ok, so there's the spinning lariat done in a Zangief style, but Hulk's most potent attacks are more like angry sulk moves. For example, a foot stomp sees him bashing his foot to the ground making it vibrate or break. Any enemies nearby are taken off their feet making them vulnerable. The floor smash does pretty much the same thing except Hulk uses his enormous fists instead. Then there's the sonic clap which does exactly what it says, the sound deafening and stunning enemies.





There are lots of robotic enemies on the earlier levels like this flying chap here. It's a good job Hulk can do flying kicks.

PANTHEON SAGA





Such is the strength of the Hulk that the superhero can even shuffle boxes about. He's thinking of setting up his own removals industry you know.

The Pantheon Saga is essentially a platform game viewed from an isometric perspective...

Atalanta and Hector.

The Pantheon Saga is essentially a platform game viewed from an isometric perspective, that sees the Hulk wandering about dodging traps, making use of his awesome strength on unfortunate foes, and picking up useful items to take him on to the next level. There are five separate stages in all, each of which incorporates two or more levels, and you can expect to see a whole host of Marvel characters pop in for a quick fight – enemies like Piecemeal, Trauma, Lazarus and Maestro.

There's still quite a bit of work to be done on The Pantheon Saga yet (it's about 50% complete at the moment)what with the graphics still lacking a certain definition and the game moving a bit too slowly at the moment. Eidos assure us that this will all be sorted out and we'll be finding out next month when we put the game under review scrutiny.



CRUSH THAT DOOR

Being the mighty colossus he is, Hulk thinks nothing of tearing through reinforced concrete walls. He laughs in the face of thick iron doors and positively cackles at the prospect of steel barriers. But show the fella a switch and he doesn't know where he is. This could cause problems because rather than pummelling through doors, Hulk has to do the decent thing and open them. This he can't do without coordinating a number of switches put about the level. Puzzle elements like this crop up throughout the game.





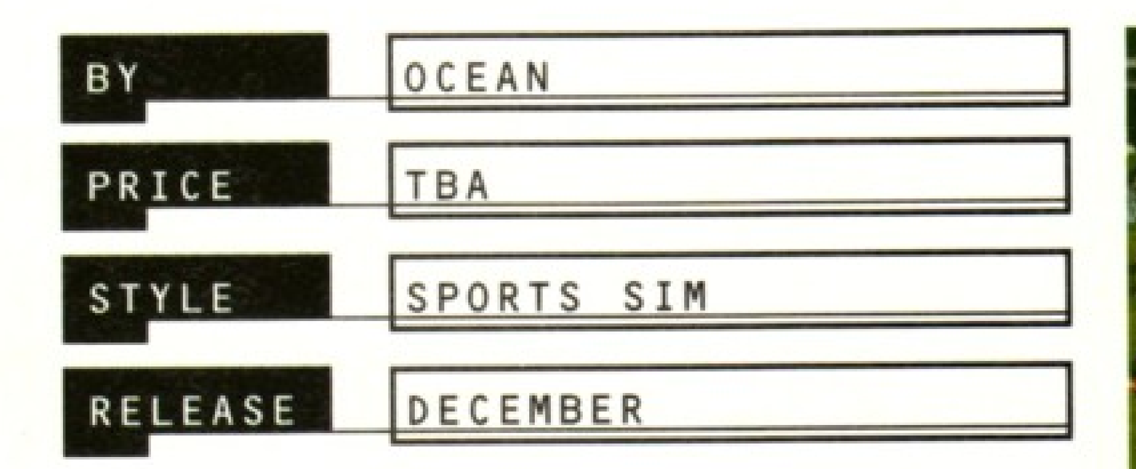


No end of obstacles await the jolly green giant, like these bubble-type things which he has to dodge as he ventures down the corridor. Be careful ole' chum!

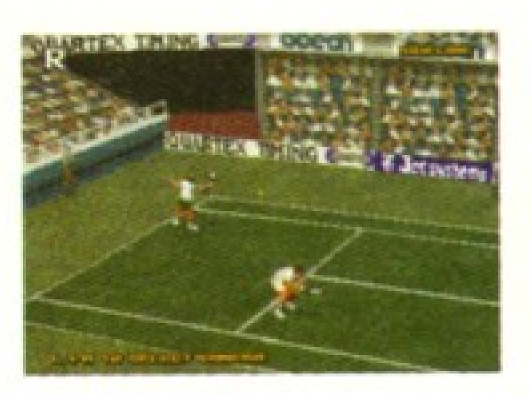


BREAK POINT

Summer may now be far behind us, and the cruel cold of winter only around the corner, but in the comfort of your own home the grass is still green, the lawns still plush, and tennis is on the go!



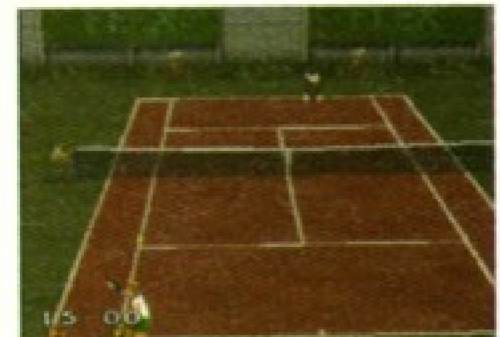
BY	OCEAN
PRICE	TBA
STYLE	SPORTS SIM
RELEASE	DECEMBER





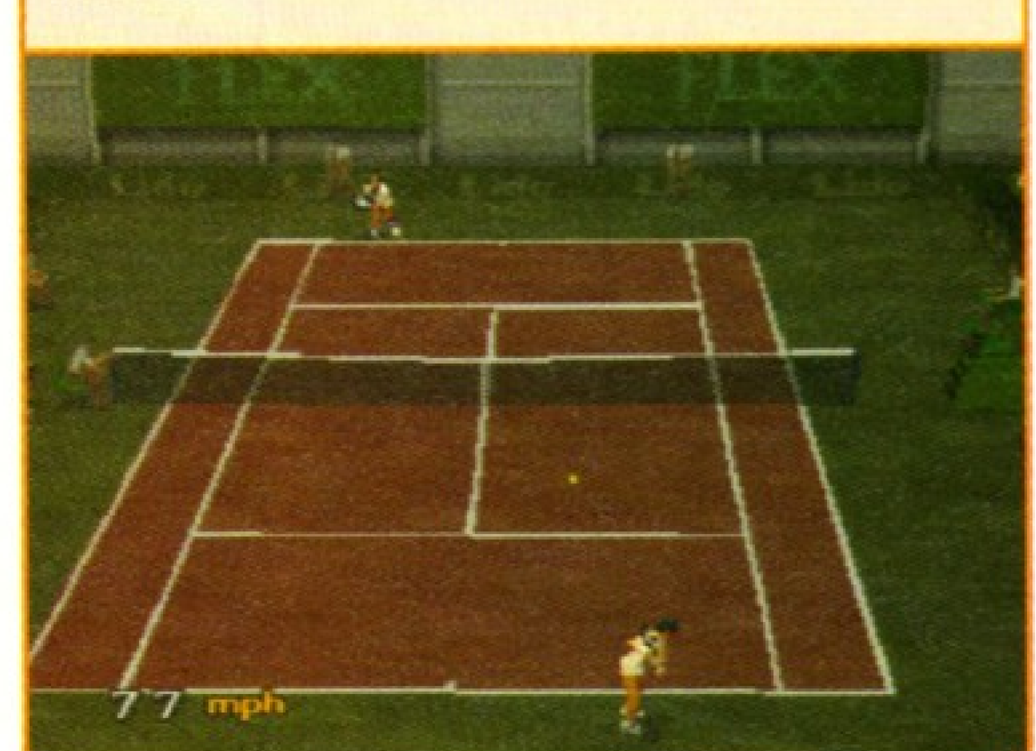
(Left above)On the replay you can watch the shot from a variety of angles. (Right above) After each service the speed is given. Using the power serve you can do anything up to 120 mph.





SILVER SERVICE

These days a super fast service pretty much guarantees you of winning, or at least making a respectable score. Get a fine service in and the point is as good as won. With Break Point there's a similar emphasis on serve. Players choose between using the automatic serve which does everything for you, or a manual serve involving timing and judgment. With the former the speed of service is a tame 80 mph and should only be used as a second service. But get the manual serve right and the speed increases to well over 100mph, sometimes reaching about 120mph. Obviously this cuts down the amount of time your opponent has to respond and means you can start racking up the aces.





It's an odd thing indeed that probably the best tennis game most people will have played is now a good five years old and plays on a console with half the capacity of a Saturn. I'm talking about Super Tennis on the Super NES, and the secret of its longevity lies in how playable and addictive it is.

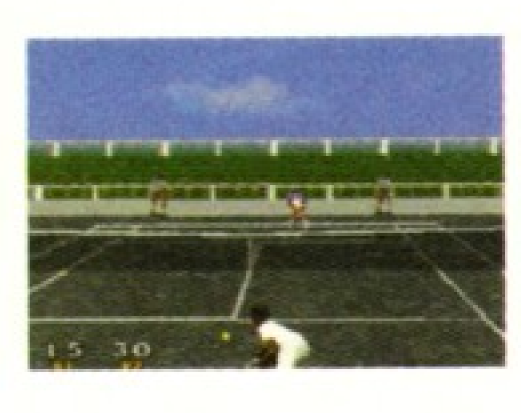
Since those heady days, tennis sims have appeared in a whole range of guises, 32 bit versions normally rejecting the stubby cartoon style graphics in favour of greater realism. But what we haven't seen is a tennis game that manages to capture the realism of the gameplay – the thrill of a good rally, scoring an ace, the satisfaction of a hearty smash – without sacrificing a sense of immediate playability and fun. No easy task admittedly, but with Virtual Open Tennis, the only tennis game to appear on the Saturn as yet, you'd think programmers could have done a bit better. Well, Ocean have been brave enough to take up what's become a bit of a poisoned chalice, and have put together Break Point. This features all of the usual elements you'd expect to see in a tennis sim – different court surfaces, eight selectable players, up to four players if you're indulging in doubles – and a control method that Ocean think is really quite smart. We're not willing to say whether it is or not, this being a preview after all, but we can tell you that, initially at least, it takes a bit of getting used to.

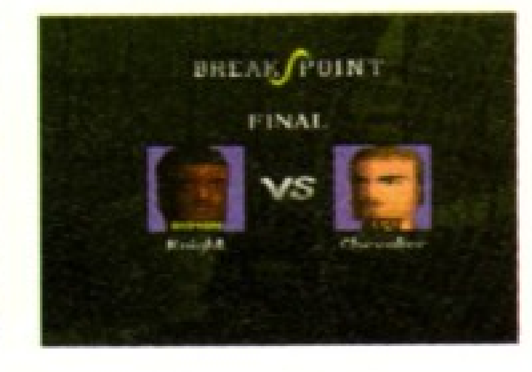
Like Virtual Open Tennis, Break Point adopts a realistic graphic approach, something that's exemplified by some of the detailed touches to the 3D polygon players. For example, you can cause your player to wipe the sweat from his/her brow, get them to straighten the strings on their racquet between points or prompt them to bounce the ball on a service as they psyche themselves up. Admittedly this doesn't affect the gameplay but it's quite pleasant all the same.

Ocean are hoping to have Break Point in the shops before Christmas, so you can expect our review in next months issue.



(Above) If a player wins a particularly long or arduous rally they have a little celebration at the end of it.
(Below left) Two players do battle on the concrete court next to the hotel.
(Below right) Two square-headed players do battle.





COURTING FAVOUR

As is a regular feature in tennis sims, Break Point comes with a choice of court surfaces. Naturally there's good ole' English lawn tennis which makes for a much faster game, and there's also hard and clay courts. Clay is the slowest but it means there's a greater chance of rallies, and hard court makes for a greater effects from spin on the ball. In addition to these three, there's also a concrete court next to a lovely white hotel on the beach.







BLAST CHAMBER

Sports all have much harder names in the future. And they seem to be made up of real words too, unlike golf or cricket, which make no sense. The latest descriptive nomenclature belongs to the exploding-people-in-rooms game Blast Chamber. Let's rock!

BY	ACTIVISION
PRICE	£TBA
STYLE	FUTURE SPORTS
RELEASE	DECEMBER

PLAYING WITH YOUR FRIENDS

Got lots of friends? Got a multitap? And four joypads? Well you must be just about the only person reading this who has. You spoiled get. Bet you bought your friends, too. Anyway, if you've got some friends and access to a multi-tap and four pads, you'll be able to take advantage of Blast Chamber's four-player option. This pits all the players against each other. If there aren't four of you, you can always use the CPU to bump up the numbers or play with fewer participants. The possibilities are endless.





Ooh, look at all those tiny men running around. They look to be having a lot of fun. Until one of them EXPLODES that is, showering his guts all over the show.





Here are the (maximum) four contenders, as shown in the FMV intro. Lovely.

The thing with future sports simulations is that they always rely on strange scientific principals that are yet to be explained. Perhaps that's why they're future sports, thinking about it, instead of current ones. Although that said, I did once see an ace cyber-sport on the TV show Another World about this family who get zapped into the evil future, right, and in it there was this sport played with long curvy things on the end of your arms and the players spang a ball about like in tennis. And, right, it turns out that there really is a sport like that, and it's been going on for years on a Polynesian island or somewhere. So you never know.

I do know, though, that there is no sport anywhere on the planet right now that features a revolving room and electric pits of death. And even if there is, the central object to the game would be a ball, and not a glowing energy crystal. And even if there was and it was, power-ups wouldn't appear which would reverse your opponent's controls. So I think I've safely covered myself there.



That strange catapillar-like plume of multi-coloured smoke is the player. He's about to blow up 'cause he's swallowed a bomb.

There is no sport anywhere on the planet right now that features a revolving room and electric pits of death

If anyone really does try playing this sport – even in the future – they'll break their necks.



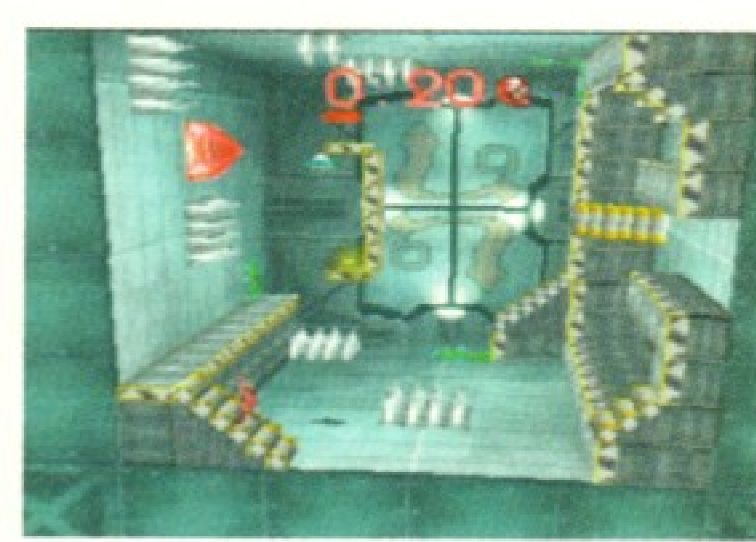


One of the tougher multi-player levels, this one requires judicious use of spring-loaded platforms to scooby-doo your foes.

Blast Chamber is, as you may have guessed by now, a future sports title. The chamber of the title is a square room, into which four players and a glowing ball are thrown. Each player is assigned a colour, and each face of the room has a base of the corresponding hue. Oh yeah, and each player also has a time bomb strapped to them. The object of the game is to get the ball into the base. Post it into an opponent's home and their bomb timer loses ten







Oh yeah, we forgot to tell you about the camera angles and stuff in Blast Chamber. Use the L and R buttons to rotate your perspective to see into the corners. If you want.







As you can see, no two Blast Chambers are the same. There are forty of them, you know. In one-player mode. And another twenty for competitive games. That's sixty altogether.



If a character is glowing like the blue guy above it means they're carrying the power crystal. Bash it off them! Now!



Relax, violence fans, that isn't a laser gun. It's just the indicator which shows who's having their time cut (or extended).



This is the most basic Chamber. One colour per side. No fancy trickery. Just man against man, like in the old days.





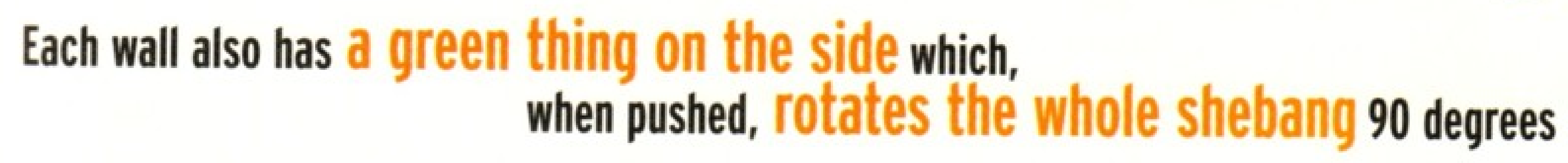
If you'd like to witness the room rotation effect of Blast Chamber simply spin this magazine through 180 degrees.

seconds. Post it into your own and your timer is replenished. The winner of the game is he (or she) who is blown up the fewest times. So you'd think whoever has their base on the ceiling is in luck. Which is where you'd be be totally wrong, because each wall also has a green thing on the side which, when pushed, rotates the whole shebang 90 degrees in the corresponding direction. As if all this weren't enough to contend with, some chambers (there are loads, you see) have extra hazards, like obstacles, electric pits of death and spikes.

If all this sounds suspiciously like human interaction for you, don't worry. There's also a solitary one-player mode which pits you against some fiendish level layouts and time itself.

This is more like a puzzle game than a sports title, so Blast Chamber is really two games in one. Two highly similar games, perhaps, but it's the concept that counts.

So, you futuristic sports fans, if there are any, this looks like being a game for you. Obviously. It's not going to be a game for people who hate futuro-basketball-type games, after all. Anyway, if you are interested in what Blast Chamber has to offer, make a special mental note to check out the review, probably in the next issue.



Each wall also has **a green thing on the side** which, when pushed, **rotates the whole shebang** 90 degrees

PLAYING WITH YOURSELF

Blast Chamber might have a good multiplayer line-up, but it rewards solitaire play too. There are twenty different blast chambers in the two-player game for your squad to battle each other on. The one-player game, on the other hand, features twice as many. They start out pretty easy, but by number ten things get considerably tougher. You have to use your brain a lot more than when you're trouncing other dudes. If this sounds too much like hard work for your mind, there's also a solo league option too, to indulge your sporting fancies.



letters™

Hello, I'm RAD, and I demand that you be my friend. Right this minute.

Intybinty, readers, and welcome to a special sad and lonely edition of the SSM letters page. I'm all sad and lonely you see, readers, and no-one wants to talk to me. Sometimes I think that no-one would notice if I didn't turn up at work for a week (I certainly would - Rich). But that's probably because I'm such a skiver already. Anyway, if I don't have some human contact soon, I might go mad like those blokes in solitary confinement you see in drama mini-series. Which is where you come in. Yes YOU – the SSM readership – are the only people who can save my sanity. Please write to me. You can reach me at I HEAR VIOLINS MAILBAG, SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON EC1R 3AU. Please be my friends. From your pal, Rad.

PIGEON ENGLISH

DEAR SSM,

Being an unemployed Nottingham bloke I spend a lot of time wandering around the city centre (or playing overrated games like NiGHTS!).

Anyway, one morning whilst returning from the job centre a pigeon swooped down right in front of me to pick up a morsel of food two homeless people were fighting over. It cut through the air with skill and panache like one of Jockey Wilson's darts. It was then that I realised that I had a future in the games industry! We've all seen hedgehogs, dolphins, worms and even moles (remember Monty you sad Spectrum owners?), so why not pigeons? The potential is amazing. From the womb to the tomb, from being bred till your dead! You would spend you days fighting for scraps of food, dodging people and traffic on the busy city streets, taking a dump at unsuspecting passersby, and of course having lots of pigeon sex!

[So that's a normal day in your life, then? – SSM]

If PC owners can have games about cats and dogs why shouldn't Saturn owners have pigeons? Please pass on these details to Sega as I know this will be the next big thing. If on the other hand you think it's a load of crap print the letter anyway so the readers can have a laugh.

Big Al the Kiddies' Pal, Nottingham

The trouble with your reasoning there, Al, is that hedgehogs et al never appear in games in their natural habitats. For good reason. A pigeon's short and ugly life is even less interesting and noteworthy than that of a worm. And at least worms don't start flapping around your head when you're trying to walk along a pavement. It's a nice try, Al, and I'm sure now we've derided your efforts Pigeon Master will now make you a million pounds.

NOT ONE GIRL, EVER. HONEST

TO ALL THE LOVELY PEOPLE OF SSM,

Oi! Listen to me, 'cause I have just come up with another exclusive idea following the Console Babe of the Year and Dress Up Dural competitions (which you rudely titled I Have Never Seen a Girl in issue 10 and Still Hasn't Seen a Girl in issue 12).

Characters in console games aren't just there to be in games. They want to be in a Console Matchmaking Competition of the Year. Personally, I think Ken out of Street Fighter and Sarah out of Virtua Fighter would be the perfect couple. But you could get the whole of Britain (Ireland as well) to send in "My Kinda Couple". What do you think? I think it's the third best idea following the Babe of the Year and Dress Up Dural competitions.

See you old chums of SSM,

EC Penguin, N Ireland.

That's not bad, actually. If only there was some point to it.

AN OBSESSIVE MANIAC WRITES

DEAR SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE,

I've just seen an episode of the X-Files aired on September 26 entitled DPO and was pleased to see the use of Virtua Fighter 2 in their arcade scenes. Then I noticed a few strange differences. First of all Akira and Lau were fighting, but when the bout ended, Sarah's line "Even good guys blow it" came out.

They also showed a shot of the VF Ranking screen, but in the real arcade, they don't show the time at which the fight took place. Yet in this particular shot they did.

Finally the cabinet table on which the joystick and buttons are situated was a totally different colour and pattern.

Yes! I know I am completely mad on video games. Sorry – but I had to write.

Zoheir Beig, South Harrow, Middx.

Well, Zoheir, that'll be because the X-Files is actually fictional television. The time display was created simply as a plot contrivance, and the wrong samples can be attributed to overdubbing. If they'd really recorded the scene in a real arcade all you'd have been able to hear would be "Scchhfblamblamrrrr...aliens... vrrrmblapblap... conspiracy...skrrrnn-nderderderdadabooom".



That NiGHTS feller has got everso big feet. He looks like some sort of kangaroo. A purple one.

WHO NEEDS DRUGS?

DEAR SATURN MAG,

I LOVE YOU! As it was your first Saturn magazine what made me run out and buy (yes, the best buy in my life) a SATURN and can now thank you for my square eyes and the constant dribble that runs down my chin. I AM AN ADDICT. YIPEEE. I wanted to thank you and the HOLY SEGA for NiGHTS which I purchased on import £85 from HMV the day it came out. THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU you are great. I think they called it NiGHTS as ever since I bought it I've stayed up all NIGHT playing NiGHTS till 6.00 am (I love Sega), Anyway, here is a message to everybody in the world – BUY A SATURN and buy NiGHTS. Yes it is the best game in the world and by the best company in the world (stop for a play of NiGHTS). Also the music is the best music in a game ever and is totally dreamy and warps your mind like you're floating in a dream (or tripping). Who needs drugs when you can have NiGHTS? I think that the A-LIFE is XL and there is just one little question I need to ask. On my shiny new white posh 3D controller the cable unplugs from the controller in a rather cool way. Do you know what this is for?

I LOVE YOU ALL

Thanks,

Nicholas Holden, Clayton, Manchester.

Well don't blame us.

COME ON SEGA! MAKE SOME MAGAZINES! NOT GAMES!

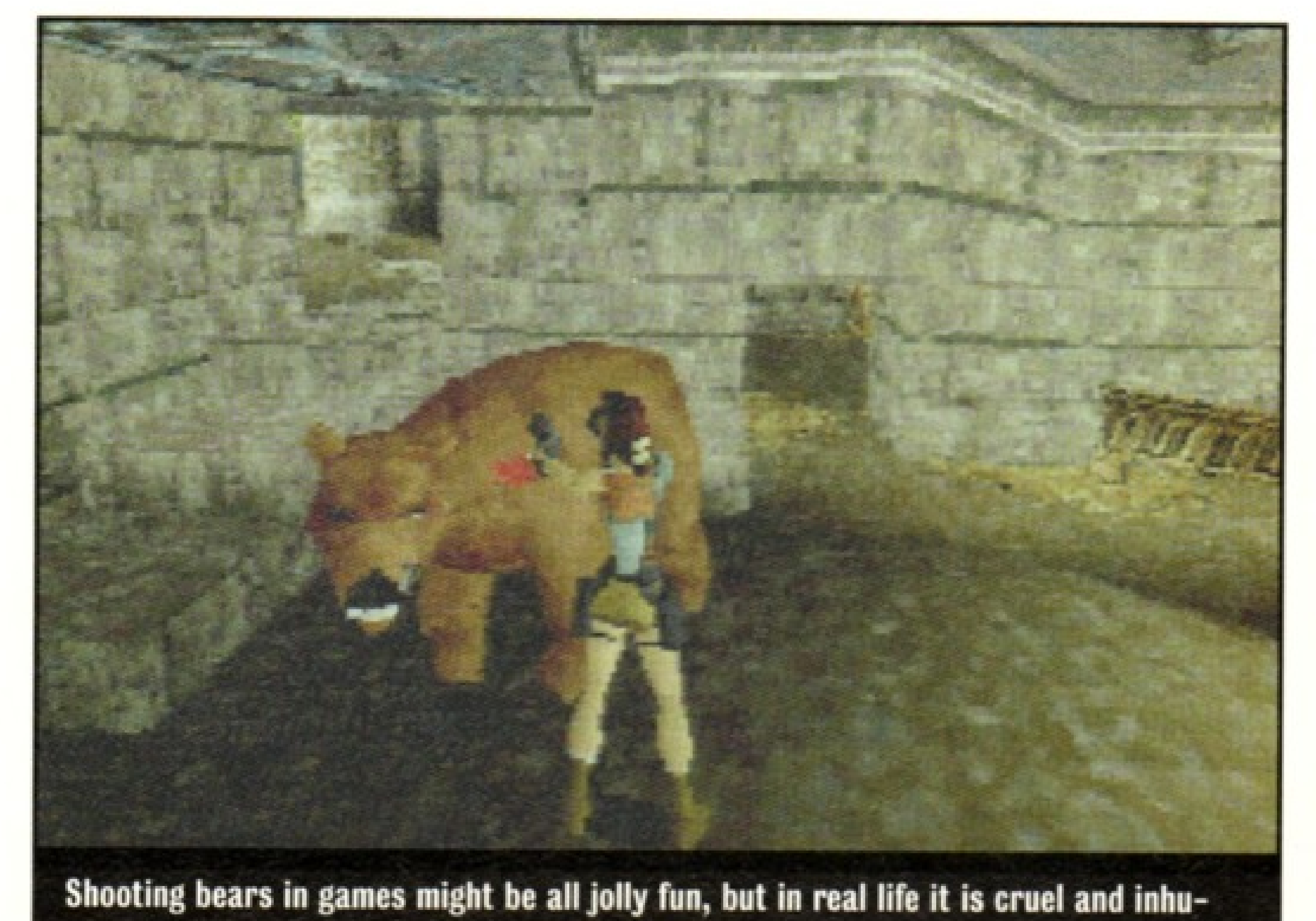
DEAR SSM,

May I congratulate you on your excellent magazine, definitely the best read for Saturn owners. Which brings me nicely onto my reason for writing... magazines.

Rad photo by David Titlow.

Where the hell are they?
The only specialised magazines are SSM and Mean Machines Sega, and how many PlayStation mags are there? Six? Seven? Eight maybe? Most of them having demo CDs on the covers every month as well! What is going on? Is it that Sega are being tight with the thousands of pounds they get every month or is it just that they can't be bothered entertaining their loyal Saturn owners? Or maybe it's because everyone thinks there's no market for another Saturn mag? Just think, Sega would make even more money and probably gain more happy Saturn owners!

Wayne Caffin, White Post, Bletchingley, Surrey.



Shooting bears in games might be all jolly fun, but in real life it is cruel and inhumane. Please readers, don't kill any real bears. Just computer generated ones.

Erm... I think you're missing the point here. Sega can indeed be bothered entertaining their customers, which is why they make games. We, on the other hand, being magazine publishers and not Sega, make magazines. Sega don't. Not a one. Not even this one. So it's our fault. Sorry, but we're not likely to be bothered as it means we've got the market stitched up and we make all the money. Ha ha.

IF IT'S TOO POLYGONAL, YOU'RE TOO OLD

DEAR SSM,
After years of waiting around and trying to keep patient with Nintendo's release policies regarding the UK/European market I have just bought (albeit a bit late) a Sega Saturn with Virtua Fighter and Sega Rally (and I also bought Shining Wisdom) and I must say that I am astounded with the machine. I really don't know why I didn't get the Saturn on its initial release. I have played on the N64 on a mate's machine and to be honest the Saturn is equally as good. I am looking forward to quite a few years of enjoyment from my Saturn as I did with the Megadrive. Number 11 was the first issue of your mag I read. I think that it is excellently presented and I am really looking forward to reading the next issue.
Having played Landstalker on the Megadrive , which to me was one of the best games I have ever played, I was wondering if you knew of any plans to do a follow-up to the game for the Saturn. I am an RPG/adventure addict and I have been playing these games since I first played Knight Lore on the Spectrum. I also like the looks of Exhumed and also Tomb Raider sounds very exciting indeed.
My wife says that at 36 I am too old to be still playing video games but I get just as much a thrill as I did when I first started playing games nearly 20 years ago. Anyway, I hope you have info regarding a follow-up to Landstalker on the Saturn and I look forward to reading many more issues of your magazine. All the best to all concerned at SSM.

A Brooks, Sutton in Ashfield, Notts.

You'll be glad to hear about Dark Saviour then, which is quite Landstalkerish. It'll be out in a couple of months, so look out for a Showcase. And your wife is right. At 36 you are far too old to be playing games and should be concentrating on your garden.

ANYONE FOR NEXUS?

DEAR SSM,
Sequels. What is an acceptable suffix before it all gets too monotonous. Mortal Kombat, Street Fighter, Double Dragon etc all suffered this enigma status. Now that VC2, VF3, Panzer Dragoon Zwei (hmm... I wonder what zwei means (it's German for Two - Rich)) are seemingly following the same format. What they should be doing is releasing titles like Sega Rally Nights (where you drive at night, funnily enough!) or Tokyo 2011 – featuring Virtua Cops, or Nexus – featuring the VF crew!!! This, I think, would generate more interest by the presentation, packaging or storylines (if any).
Hell, everyone knows there will be VC3, VF4, FIFA '97 etc because the licenses are just too profitable. But it's getting MAD!!!... just MAD!!!... MAD I say!!!... (crash... bang)... Ah, that's better! Phew!!

Gary Jones, Hall Green, B'Ham.



What on Earth are you going on about?

Panzer Dragoon Zwei – well, it's better than just a "2" suffix, I suppose. It's German, you know.

NICE TRY, WEALTHY KID

DEAR SSM,
Have you ever thought about converting your mag to CD. I think this would be a great idea. 1 Because readers would not be able to flick through the pages of your mag and think it's not so good this month and not buy it. 2 In reviews, previews, features etc you could put clips of games in action and in interviews with programmers just record them. Please consider this, I think it would be great reading SSM via Saturn. It's also ozone friendly , and it would take up less space in my room.
"Great mag, even better on CD"

John McBride, Kirkintilloch, Glasgow.

Great idea! Then, thanks to the expenses of CD reproduction, we could charge seven quid for every issue! And no-one could pick it up off the shelves, see something good inside and buy it. And, thanks to the extra costs incurred filming the magazine like a TV show with all the interviews, we'd have to put the price up again, to about a tenner, just so our readers could clock their eyes on some spotty mathematician telling us about his new game. Brilliant.

TRY THE READERS CHARTS

DEAR SSM,
Hi! I'm writing to agree with Scott Witham in issue 10 about how today's youth should be able to give their own opinions about computer games.
However, I have a BETTER idea. Why not have a page where all the readers have the chance to write in and vote for their top three games of that month. Then you can add up all the votes and give a result for the most favoured games of that month.
Please consider it as it is a class A1 idea because I came up with it and don't give me a crappy little comment box or something like you did to Scott or I shall be forced to cry. Bear in mind – sarcasm is the lowest form of wit.
Yours sincerely,

Jamie Lawrie, Halesowen, W Mids.

Yeah, and that's the lowest form of retort. Anyway, you may not have noticed the thing at the front with the "Reader's Chart" headline above it. This is the space we allocated for our readers to send in a top ten of their favourite games. And if we print it they get a game. It's not dissimilar to your idea, but we don't have to waste three weeks adding up all the votes. Not a bad idea, Jamie, but a bit unwieldy.

WHAT YOU'VE BEEN WRITING ABOUT THIS MONTH
We want more driving games! **How ace last month's cover CD was.** How hard to get hold of last month's cover CD was. **Please, no more driving games!** Big up to the games massive!



If there's one thing we know about, it's games. Games on the Saturn. And in this section, MCed by the editor, Richard Leadbetter and Sega's big cheese, Mark Maslolwicz, we demonstrate this not-inconsiderable knowledge to its fullest possible potential. So... get sending in those testing questions NOW! Write away to: **ORACLE OF WISDOM Q+A, SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON EC1R 3AU.** Inventive questions guarantee more entertaining and enlightning responses. Crap enquiries ensure the wrath of The Master! You have been suitably warned!

I'VE GOT THE RIGHT!

Dear SSM Cool Dude,

I'm the owner of a Saturn with five games and I think I've got the right to ask you these questions:

1. Which is the best shooting games between: Alien Trilogy, Doom and Doom II and Duke Nukem 3D?
2. I've read in a Super NES magazine that the N64 will be out at Christmas and you said Easter. Which is right?
3. My friends always say that it was a mistake to buy a Saturn instead of a PlayStation. because the PlayStation has got thousands more games. Do you agree?
4. Is there any chance of an upgrade from Megadrive to Saturn?
5. I've read an Italian magazine which says you can get the Internet for the Saturn. Is this true?

Please answer my questions now because they are puzzling me too much.

Paolo Curlio, Lancing, Sussex

1. A difficult one, however it will probably be Duke Nukem - the team doing it are pretty good. However, since that isn't out for ages GET EXHUMED NOW. 2. You dare doubt the Master's word?!? Read your Super NES mags (well, NMS - all the others have been shut down) now and see what they say. 3. Yes, the PlayStation has more games. But how many of them are actually worth buying? And how many of those are from the AM departments? Think about it. 4. No. 5. No. The Saturn Netlink won't be out until around Easter. No price yet.

INSOLENT CHILD!

Dear SSM,

Your mag is brill and I have every issue of both Sega Mag and SSM to date.

1. I heard that Sega are bringing out a new 64-bit console to rival both PlayStation and Nintendo 64. Is this true and if so is it an add-on or a new machine?
2. When will the Saturn modem be available to buy in the UK? How much would it cost? Per month? Will it give the same services as a PC connection? Can you create your own net page?
3. Is the Saturn going to be upgraded to a real computer with keyboard, mouse and disk drives? It says so in the manual you get with the Saturn.
4. Is a printer planned for the Saturn?
5. Any more CD/cart combo games planned? Maybe VF3?
6. When will the following games be out in the UK: VF3, VC2, Daytona CCE, Doom, NiGHTS, Manx TT, Bug Too!, Soviet Strike?
7. I have the money to buy three games over the next few months. Which should I get?

Paul Devins, Ireland.

1. *RIVAL* THE PLAYSTATION!?! Insolent child! Anyway, it's not true. At least not for a few years. 2. The Saturn Netlink is due around Easter. Details will be announced early in the New Year. 3. You can use these with the Netlink, but it doesn't make the Saturn a full PC type computer. 4. Not at the moment 5. Maybe 6. In order: Late '97, November 28th, November 14th, December, It's out!, Feb '97, Feb '97, November. 7. Three out of Fighting Vipers, Worldwide Soccer '97, Virtua Cop 2 & Daytona CCE.



BUY THIS GAME NOW. Alien Trilogy? Pah! Get Exhumed!

MAKE A SPIDER-MAN GAME!

Dear SSM,

I've never written to a magazine before as I didn't expect my letter to get printed. Please prove me wrong by answering these questions. Or I'll send you a pair of dirty pants.

1. As well as being a big Sega fan I'm also a huge Spider-Man fan. Are there any plans for a Spider-Man game of any description for release on the Saturn (if not could you use your influence and encourage someone to make one please).
2. I've had my Saturn for quite a while but have not yet removed the protective covering from the Lithium Battery. Is there any reason to do so?
3. If I do use the battery and it runs out is it imperative to replace it or can the Saturn run without it?
4. Finally how do I get rid of the pigeons in my loft without having to go up there with a gun?

Scotty-B, Belgrave, Leicester.

1. Alas not. Personally I'd be up for a DieHard Arcade style game with some 3D webslinging in between the fights. The control method would have to be very clever in order to successfully convey Spidey's superhuman strength, speed and reflexes. Villains I would have: Green Goblin (the dead one who isn't actually dead), Venom, Carnage, Hobgoblin (the dead one who isn't actually dead), the old Doctor Octopus (even though he's dead), Sandman (before he gave up crime), Electro, Juggernaut (sub-boss) and Doctor Doom (last boss). AND you should have three or more common hoods on-screen at once for Spidey to kick the crap out of simultaneously after the web-slinging bit (This would be like Alien Solider - loads of small fry to defeat easily before the big bosses). You could also choose between the red/blue costume and the black one. And it would be brilliant. Oh yes. MAKE THIS GAME! 2. You mean the ribbon? Yes you should remove it to activate the internal memory and clock. If it's not the ribbon then I have no idea what you are talking about! 3. The Saturn works fine without it, but the clock and internal memory won't work. 4. Either: a) blow up your loft, b) shoot through the ceiling. Or c) find out how they're getting in and block it up.

CHEERS BOYZ AND GIRLS

Dear All the Good People of SSM,

Could you answer some of my questions. Cheer boyz and, um, girls (*he must be talking about you, Mark* - Rich).

1. Will there be a special footie pack with all the top football titles in for all the football maniacs out there?
2. Any idea for a VF3 release date in the arcades?
3. Will there be any Manga computer games released on Saturn like Akira or Dragon Ball Z?
4. What are the chances of VF Grannies and Grandads? Sorry, had to ask.
5. When will Fighting Vipers be out?
6. What certificate will Enemy Zero be?
7. Any chance of Virtua Cop 3?

Daniel Smith, Romford, Essex

1. Unlikely in the extreme. Get Sega Worldwide Soccer '97 for the best football game ever. 2 .It's out. Well, it's in Segaworld anyway. 3. There have been in Japan. Who knows about Europe though? 4. Please! No more! You're killing me! 5. It'll be out by the time you read this. 6. A 15 or 18 I would imagine. 7. Anything is possible as is this.

I DON'T KNOW ANY OF THE ANSWERS

Dear SSM,

Please answer my letter as I don't know any of the answers. Thanks.

1. When is Soviet Strike going to be released?
2. Do you think Sega Touring Car Championship will be released for the Saturn?
3. Why not release more demo CDs like the PlayStation mag does?
4. Which is best: Doom, Fade to Black, Exhumed?
5. Can you get black Virtua Cop guns without painting them?

Michael Foster, Northern Ireland.

1. February 1997, probably. 2.Probably next year sometime 3. We'll do a few good ones rather than lots of crap ones. 4. Exhumed, by a long chalk. 5. Yes. In Japan. Not over here.

HARD CORE 4x4





IT'S DIRTY AND DANGEROUS...

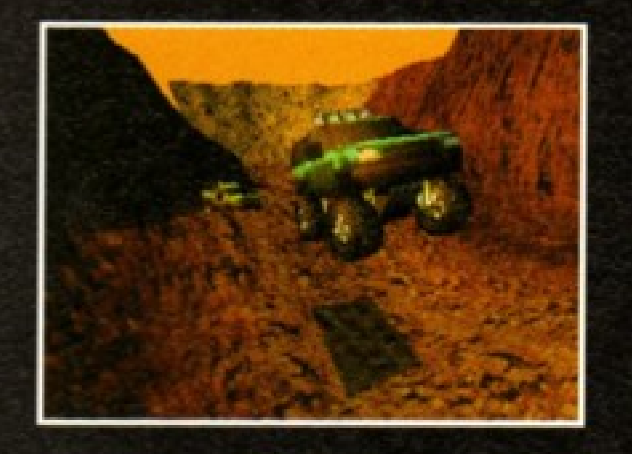
...OPPONENTS DON'T CARE HOW THEY FORCE YOU OFF...

...THE ADRENALIN PUMPS AS YOU BATTLE AGAINST SIX OF THE DIRTIEST OFF-ROAD TERRAINS...

...THE SOUNDTRACK THUMPS AS YOU SWEAT AND SLIDE THROUGH IMPOSSIBLE TURNS AND AXLE-BUSTING DROPS...

...ONLY EXTREME SKILL AND CONCENTRATION CAN KEEP YOU IN THE GAME NOW...

...BECAUSE YOU'RE HAVING THE TOUGHEST, DIRTIEST EXPERIENCE OF YOUR LIFE.





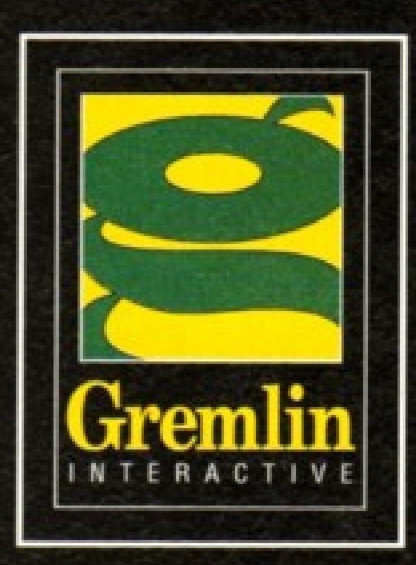
OFF ROADING- IT'S A DIRTY GAME

BUT YOU'VE GOT TO PLAY IT!

CATCH US ON http://www.gremlin.com THE WEB

SEGA SATURN™

PlayStation




VIRTUA COP 2
SPECIAL POLICE
POLICE
POLICE

Crime War In Virtua City!

AM2 don't just make games, they make whole genres. Point in fact – gun games. If you want to use that old name for them. Today, when a new shooting game appears, it's referred to as Virtua Cop-like. Such was the influence of that seminal AM2 blaster. Well, here's another Virtua Cop-like game. Perhaps the only one deserved of that title – the awesome sequel!

Virtua Cop 2. When AM2 decided to revisit the shooting game territory they'd revolutionised with Virtua Cop, they made a simple decision. Virtua Cop had succeeded because it was a simple, addictive game within a stunningly impressive graphical shell. The sequel needed exactly the same winning formula – the same simple, addictive gameplay in an even more stunningly impressive graphical shell! That's what they made, and Virtua Cop 2 has been a massively popular arcade pull ever since. And now the time has come for that arcade success to be translated onto Saturn.



Ah, how we've missed cleansing the streets of Virtua City of stinking punks!



Once more, Rage and Smarty grab their trusty brainbiters and send scum to Valhalla!

FUN-SIZE COP GAME!

The first Virtua Cop didn't just translate onto the Saturn well, it translated perfectly! In fact, Saturn Virtua Cop is quite possibly the best arcade-to-console conversion ever! No mean feat when you consider the task undertaken.

Virtua Cop took the basic shooting gallery concept – previously no more complex than a 2D backdrop with targets popping up – and brought to it, full 3D environments. Instantly the experience was transformed, as the camera span around at 360 degrees, zooming toward distant enemies, panning up to face snipers. And these enemies weren't just dummy sprites that registered hits. They were full 3D humanoids with multiple hit zones. Shoot 'em in the legs, the chest, the head. Hell, you could even blow the weapon out of their hand!

AM2'S SECRET WEAPON!

The total experience required one more crucial factor – the precision-tuned Virtua Gun. Perfectly offloading deadly coloured splashes onto the screen, it made the game feel ultimately convincing and totally thrilling!

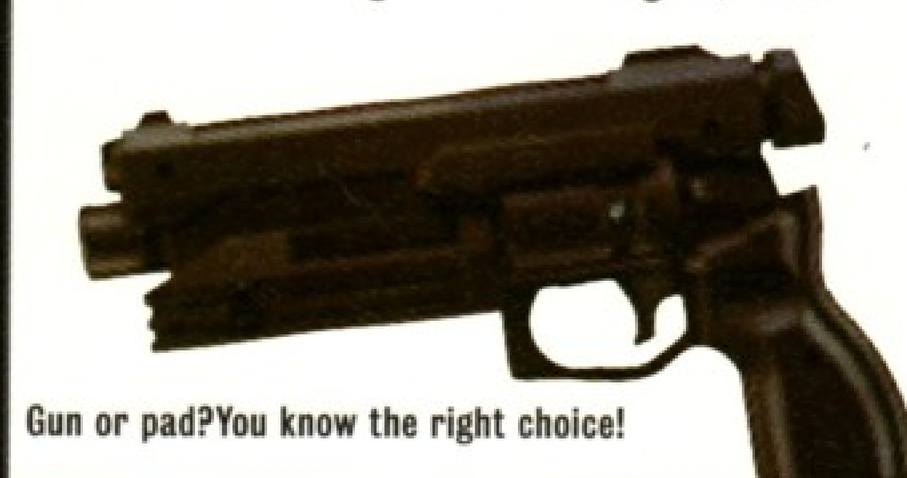
This is what AM2 had to convert to Saturn. And they did, every last bit. The graphics, the explosive sound, the gun, its accuracy tuned to work perfectly on a home television. If anything, the game ran even faster and featured home improvements – extra interactive scenery, original options. It IS one of the most phenomenal home game experiences in existence!

And so to Virtua Cop 2. Could AM2 repeat that conversion success again? After all, what makes the sequel so much more impressive than the first game? We don't need to answer that. Just look at the pictures on the following pages, because everything that makes the coin-op so mind-blowing, has made it into the Saturn version. Yep, AM2 have done it again! Dat's mah boys!

TIME TO UNPACK THAT SHOOTER!

Naturally, Virtua Cop 2 uses the Virtua Gun. So if you haven't got one, you'd better consider heading down to your local Virtua Gun Shack and purchasing yourself a pistol IMMEDIATELY! In fact, we recommend you get one packed in with the first Virtua Cop, cos no right-minded Saturn owner should be without it!

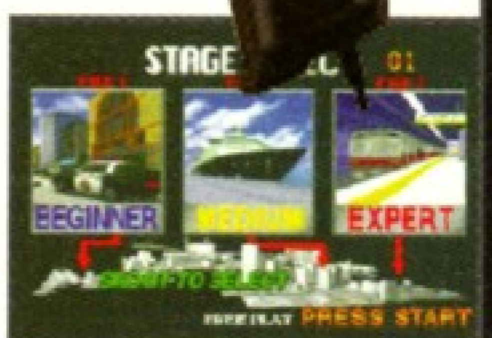
Incidently, the game IS configured to work with the NiGHTS analogue pad. But while this is an improvement over control pad, it still isn't that great. Get the gun, fool!



Gun or pad?You know the right choice!



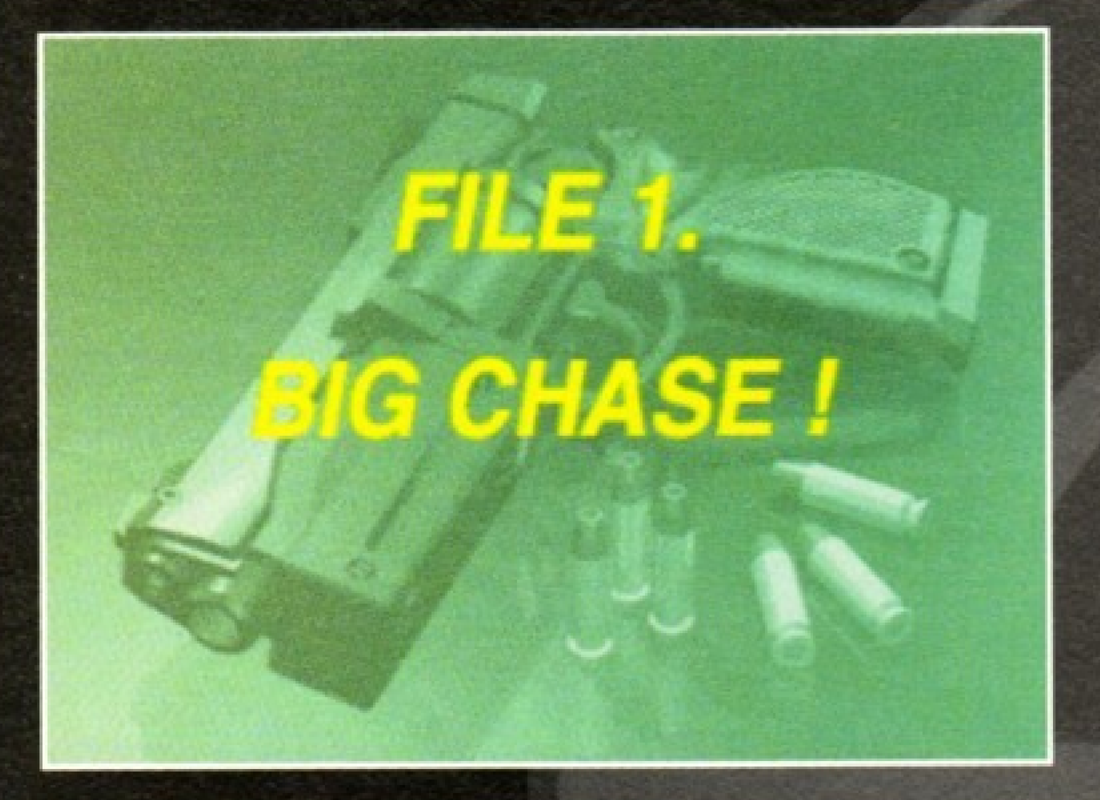
As before, the gun can be configured to your bog-eye vision.

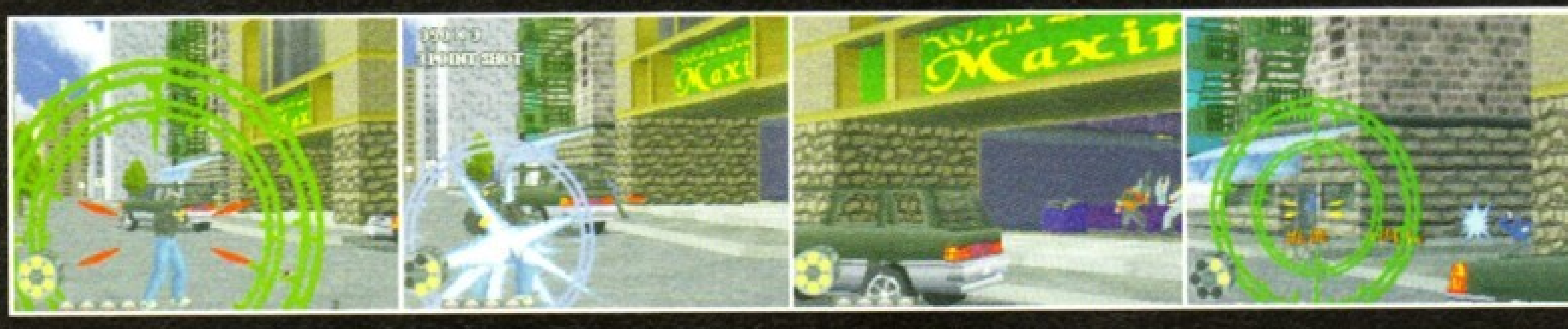


Once calibrated, it's time to hit those streets!

BEGINNER FILE 1: BIG CHASE!

Fans of the original Virtua Cop may remember how the plot centred around the dreaded EVL Corporation, whose headquarters and boss were destroyed by Virtua Cops Rage and Smarty at the end of the game. Well, it seems the criminal organisation were not as wiped out as was previously thought. Regrouping under a mysterious new leader, EVL have surfaced again. This time with the intention of taking over Virtua City through street-level warfare!





SCENE 1: THE HEIST!

The first report of trouble comes from the World Medieval Maxim jewellery store. Officers Rage and Smarty race to the scene in their Virtua squadcar, driven by new partner, officer Jane Marshall. With the store alarm ringing loudly, EVL scum burst out from cover, shooting from fire escape vantage points. Inside the store, hoodlums can be seen dragging shop employees around at gunpoint. But the bulletproof glass prevents you doing anything more than leaving gunshots spattered on its surface.








Entering the shattered shop front, you're confronted by masked villains, popping up behind display cases. This section is the first indication of how advanced V Cop 2 is over its predecessor. You can damage so much property! Glass display cases, the jewellery within, even chandeliers can be spun about. Aim for the thugs though, cos they're escaping out the back! And shoot the Maxim sign near the back exit – it hides a machine gun!

SCENE 2: THE STREETS OF VIRTUA CITY!

With the store secured, Rage and Smarty exit the way they came, only to see a Virtua Coffee truck suspiciously leaving the area. Suspicious because it's screeching around a corner on two wheels, with armed thugs hanging out of every window! Time for Jane Marshall to earn her bread, as she takes off in hot pursuit, with you free to take potshots at the felons. The streets are incredibly impressive as they rush by, but you don't get long to admire them as EVL cars join the pursuit. Aiming for the gun-totting scum inside is one idea. Better still, go for the tyres and you can send the cars exploding off the road!

A quick call to Virtua City PD has mustered a road block, which the EVL escapees decide to plough into! Following the explosive crash, the fugitives emerge from the flames. You barely have time to pick them off before two armoured cars rev out of nowhere, offloading more hoods. Aside from these scumbags, there's also a whole apartment building hijacked by the gangsters. This scene is very much like that Cracky Crab hit-them-with-the hammers game, as baddies keep appearing at windows, occasionally pushing an innocent bystander ("Yoo hoo, I'm over here! Don't shoot!") into view. Look out for an extra life from the thug in the bottom-right window. There's a rifle in the big bin too!



CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE!

One major feature of Virtua Cop 2 is that it gives you a choice of paths halfway through each level. The first of these situations occurs when our Virtua Cops decide to pursue the two escaping armoured trucks, which have separated. So which way to you go – Downtown or Seaside Drive?



DOWNTOWN!

Okay, you've chosen the urban route. Racing after the truck, your journey leads into a tunnel where enemy cars join the action (remember, you're not steering. Jane's doing all the work. Just keep shooting). Leaving the tunnel, you suddenly have to face bikes. First they race past, before one races head on toward you! They're easy to defeat. Much tougher is the avalanche of oil drums that bound toward you. Blow them away before they connect! Finally, a last convoy of cars zoom into view. Be careful though, some of them are indestructible decoys!





You know why SSM's lay-outs look so great? Well a) it's because Dave Kelsall is the best designer and b) we get all the official renders and everything straight from Japan. Just like this one of Rage, Smarty and Janet.

SEASIDE DRIVE!

Heading off to the right, the road immediately runs alongside a train with an unfriendly (gun-wielding) passenger atop it. Coupled with the truck you're chasing, AND an accompanying chopper (also featuring armed occupant) things couldn't get much hairier. Unless you were joined by a massive juggernaut, which opens at the back to reveal loads of EVL dirtbags. Also, take note of the gun-waving villain that leaps onto your bonnet. You can't miss him, he *leaps* onto your bonnet!





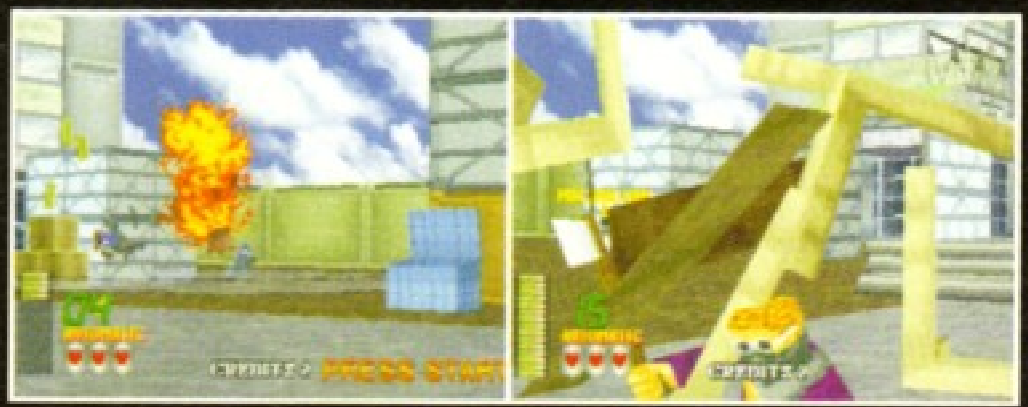






Whichever path you take, the chase winds up at an abandoned warehouse district. Here you're faced by EVL worms crawling out of the woodwork everywhere. There's an automatic available here, and a machine gun. You need them too, but be careful not to accidently pop some caps into the numerous fleeing bystanders and hostages at the scene. Exploding oil drums also make an appearance. Bear in mind though, that setting one off robs you of potential points from body counts!





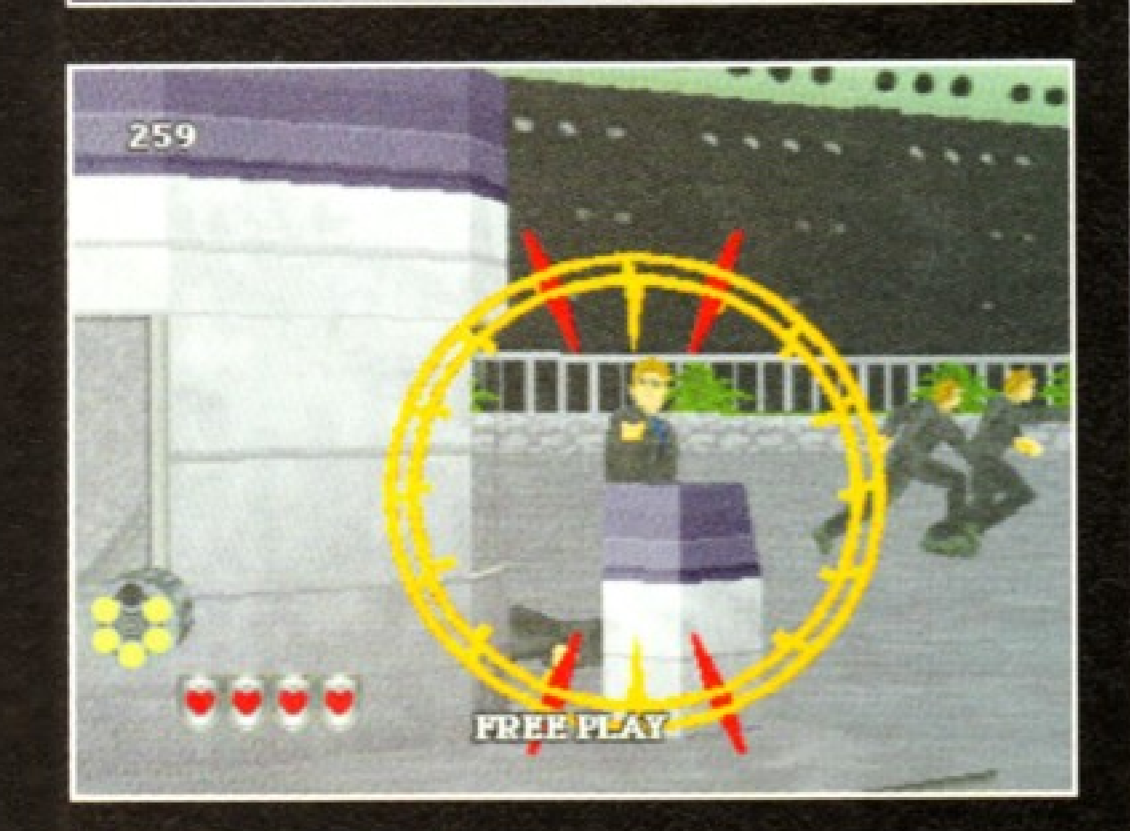
BOSS1
"HA HA HA! WHERE ARE YOU LOOKIN'? I'M OVER HERE!!"

Appearing at a high balcony, this chuckling sasquatch backs up his big mouth with some big behaviour. First launching rockets at you, before alternating his attacks by throwing oil drums and crates. Don't let your guard slip when he's close to death though, cos that's when he nicks off to get the Virtua Coffee van to chuck at you! That's what too much caffeine does!



MEDIUM FILE 2: SAVE THE MAYOR!

Having secured the street war situation, Rage and Smarty discover it was all just a ruse to keep the Virtua City police occupied while the real crime was initiated – nothing less than than the assassination of the Mayor! Not a moment to lose, as they race to the docks where his conference cruise liner is about to depart – with unwanted guests!





How come Rage and Smarty (he's the one pictured here) get "ace" nicknames while car-driver "Janet" Marshall doesn't? A free copy of VC2 to the person who comes up with the most apt nickname. Answers on a postcard to the usual address.

SCENE 1: PIER 10

Arriving at the docks, it's quite clear things are not as they should be. Unless gun-happy scumsuckers are usual employees of the Virtua City Cruise Company. With the mayor's fantastically impressive cruiser filling the background, the gun exchange begins again. The pace is soon increased when the previously-encountered chopper arrives, offloading swat troopers into the area. Distracted by a legion of hoods, our cops fail to stop the soldiers entering the main building.

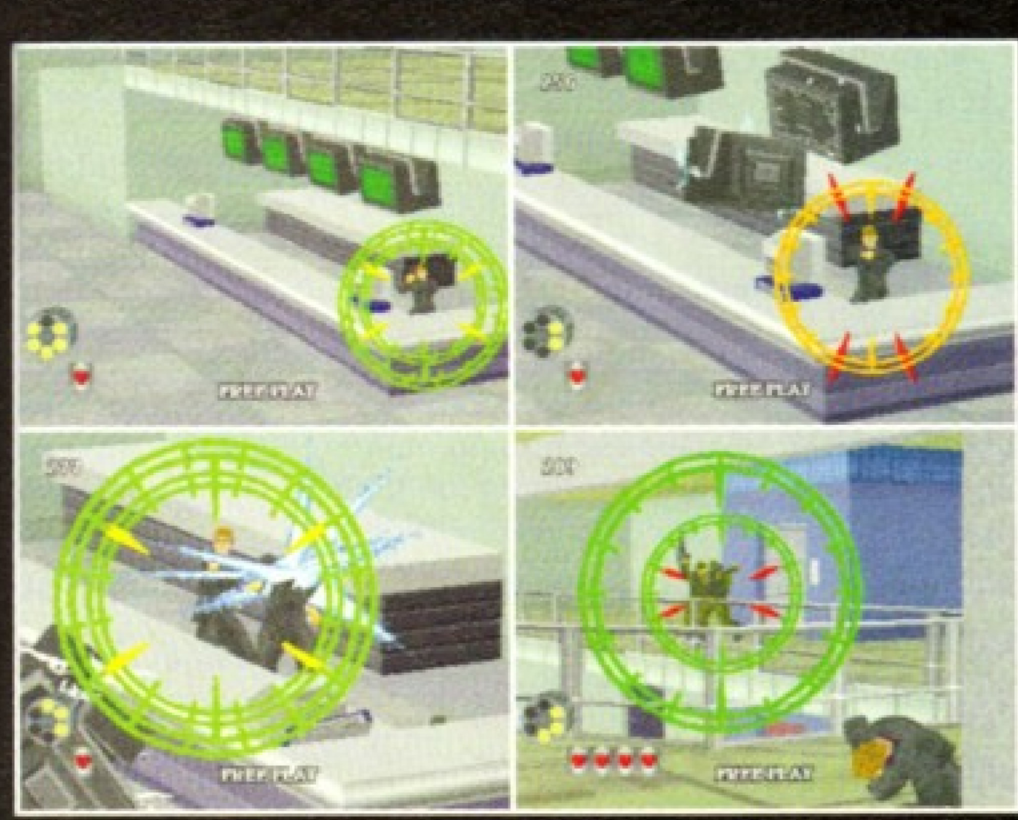








Passing through the sliding doors of the main complex, things heat up as troopers pop out from behind every corner. Blowing all the phones off the walls should keep you amused if the never-ending villain onslaught doesn't provide enough challenge. From there, it's up the stairs to face suit-wearing gangsters. Drop giant monitors on their heads. And blow up a computer to yield a handy magnum.







The check-in desk before boarding the ship, provides the final obstacles at the end of this scene. It also provides the largest destroyable item so far encountered in the game (well, you didn't totally destroy the cars). The huge glass destination board crashes down with shattering satisfaction when hit. Excellent stuff!









SCENE 2: ENTER THE CRUISE LINER!

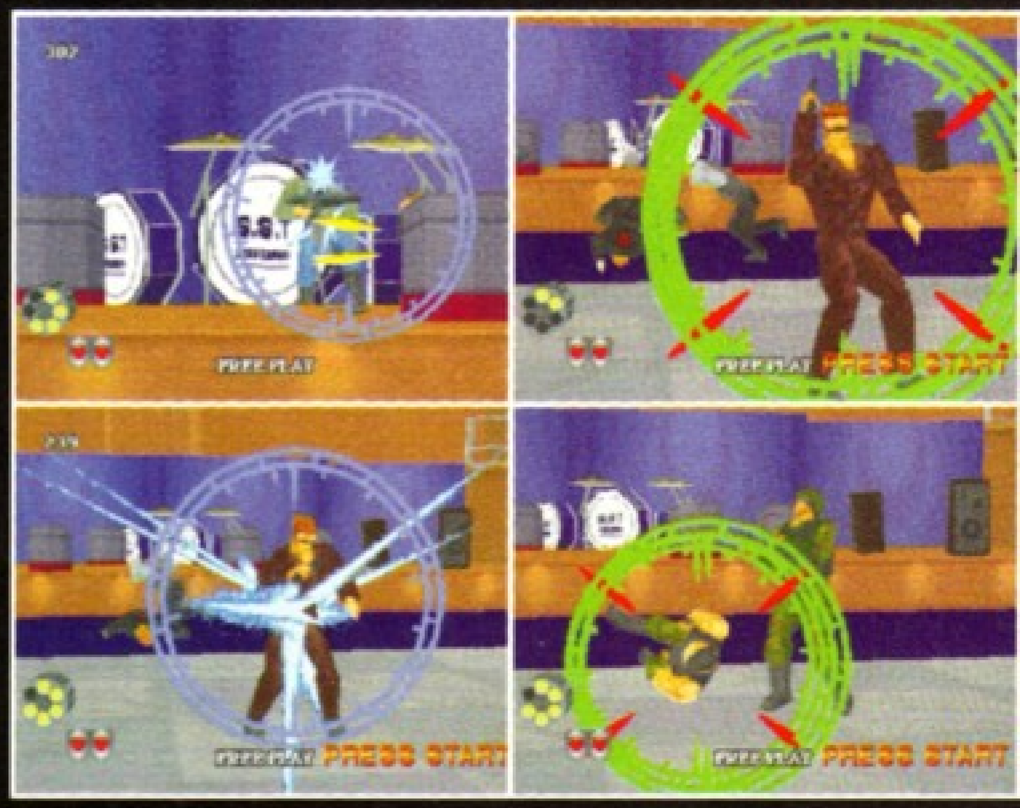
Stepping across the gangway onto the cruiser, you enter the lobby, filled with filthy ratbag EVL agents of darkness! Well, we ain't takin' no more of their bullspit! After clearing the lobby, you head up some impressively wide stairs to the landing, where more scumballs shoot from a raised balcony. A rather nice glass coffee table gets caught in the ensuing gunfire!





Next stop – the dining room. Aside from the now common infestation of EVL trash here, there's a fair amount of scenery to shoot at too! Blowing up champagne buckets, beer bottles and flower vases is extremely satisfying. Better still, there's a whole drum kit, complete with cymbals which clash when shot. You might want to take out some of the stage lights too.





CHOICE TIME: ONE DECK OR THE BRIDGE?



ONE DECK

After clearing the corridor of more scum, you get to head into the bar. Unfortunately you can't drink the Virtua Beer (not on the job), but you can still blow away all the bottles you see. Which happens to be quite a lot. This isn't as fun as it seems, as they tend to get in the way of the fat heads of the punks you're here to mop up. Anyway, the action moves on to the kitchen – winner of The Most Things To Shoot At award! Pans, cans and bottles line the area. So do chefs, but you should avoid them. Best of all though, are the melons. Not only do they explode with an extremely satisfying thud, but the explosion and movement of the chunks is superb!

The next area is memorable for the giant VF portrait of Sarah Bryant. Which you can blow off the wall incidently. After getting an automatic off an interfering soldier, you take a lift to the pool deck. Here you face an onslaught of gangsters and soldiers who shield themselves with... deckchairs. Although pleasant to shoot (they clatter about) these chairs block your fire from your true targets (unless you were aiming for the chairs).



BRIDGE

If you take the right path, you have to plough through the bedrooms of the cruise liner. Either a number of shades-wearing suit-types have booked into these rooms so they can clean their pistols, or they're EVL scum. If they're the former, it's too late once our trusty Virtua Cops have dispatched them. There's a neat moment when the view spins around to face a sneaky attack from behind, before the action leads up to the engine room. Here, thugs burst through vents in the floor and ceiling.

The final jaunt leads up to the bridge itself. A tricky area, as crew and passengers dodder around. Destroying the equipment is enjoyable – especially because you can spin the steering wheel around – but it's also practical, because there's a shotgun hidden in a monitor.



BOSS 2
"DAH, DAH, DAH... DAH!"

Depending on which route you take, you either face these rocket-packed foes on the bridge or on the deck. Whatever your location though, their attack pattern is the same. There are five of these rocketmen, each firing missiles. It's tricky stuff, because their attacks are widespread. They all share the same energy bar though, and picking each one off soon puts and end to their game.





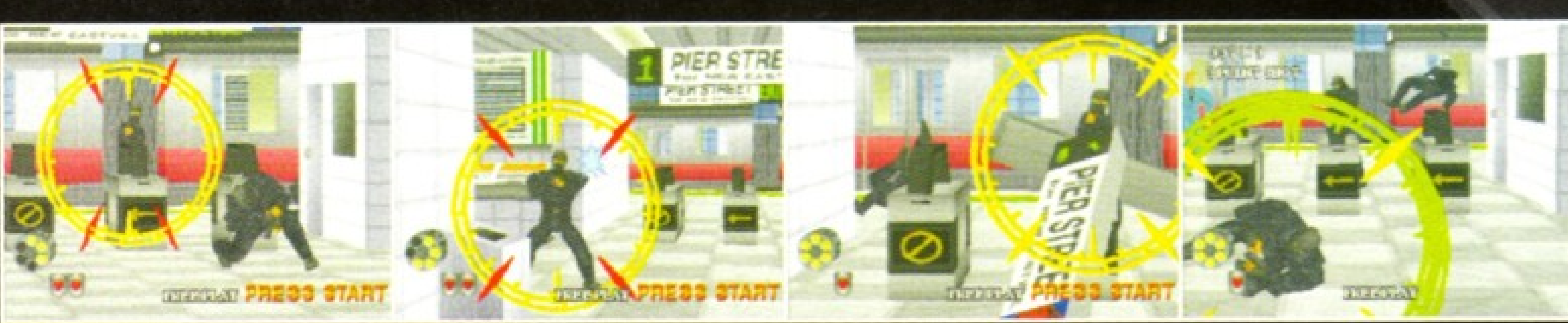
EXPERT FILE 3: RAILLINE SHOOTOUT!

With the EVL Corporation's foul assassination plot thwarted, the felons flee, hoping to escape by subway train. but not if Rage and Smarty have anything to do with it, as they take the chase to the station. And that's where the third and final stage of the Virtua City gangwar begins...



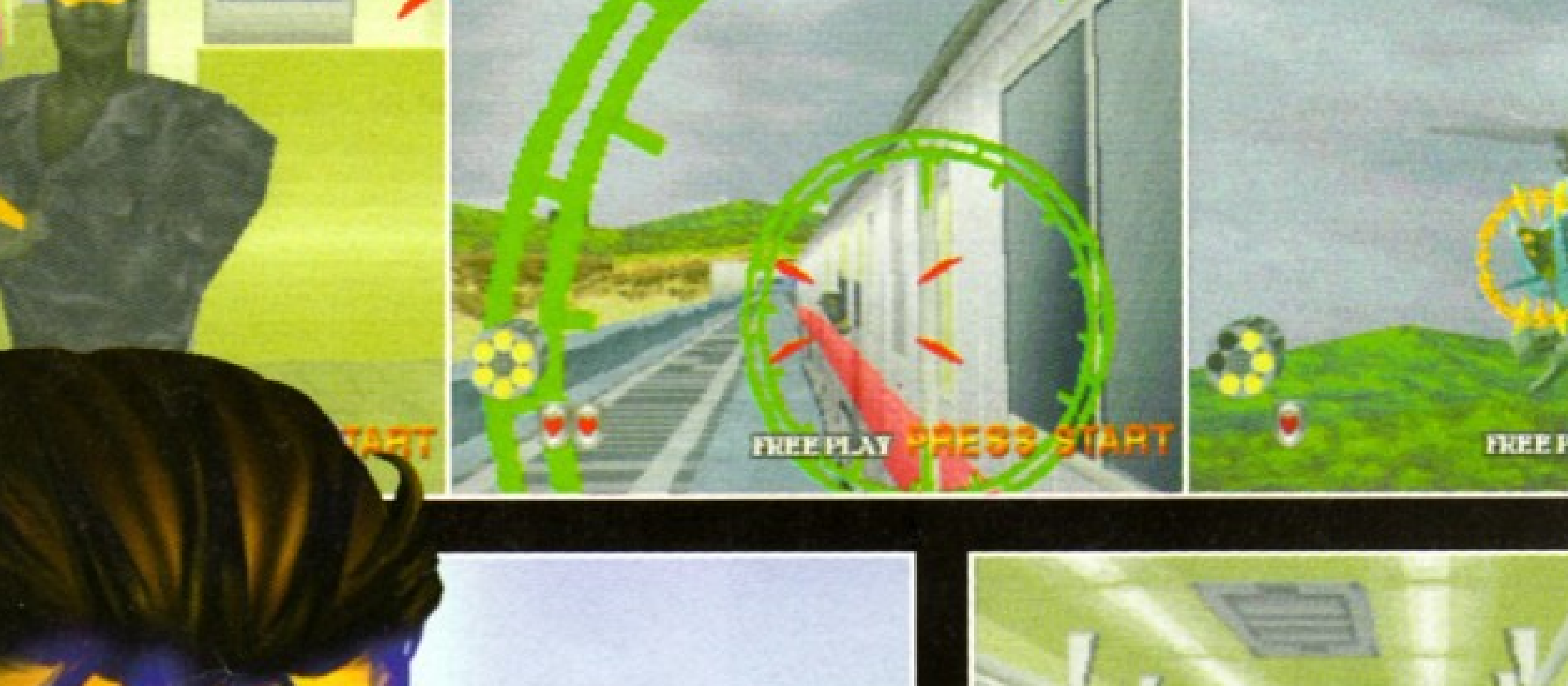
SCENE 1: PIER STREET SUBWAY STATION

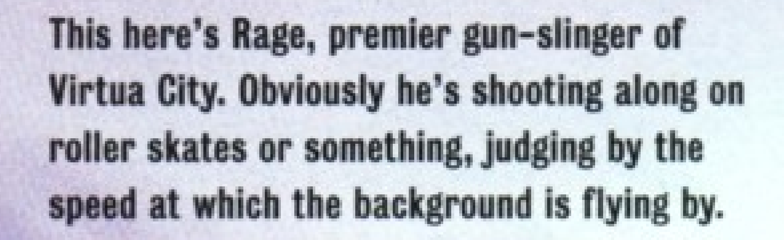
The expert difficulty setting of this stage is justified by the fact that the action begins instantly. Standing at the entrance of the subway, you're immediately confronted by machine-gun wielding ninja thugs at the bottom of the stairs. These scum-buckets have to be defeated before you can even move into the station. Once in, things heat up even more as ninja troopers duck out from behind walls and pillars. Our Virtua Cops head toward the New Eastville train. You can tell that from the signs, if you haven't blown them from the ceiling fixtures. Getting through station turnstiles is arduous normally, but with trained killers shooting away as you search for your monthly travelcard, it's downright ridiculous. Finally, a French Connection-style shootout unfolds on the platform, before you board the train.





"Wait don't shoot!" scream the passengers, disembarking as you board, waving your virtua shooter about. With the train moving, things really go mad, as ninja SWAT troopers appear in deadly streams from every corner of the train. Aiming is made all the more difficult by the swaying movement of the carriage. Aside from occasionally grabbing hostages, the thugs also attempt to bluff you by ducking about before one of them takes a shot. From here, the action moves onto the roof of the train. Aside from the ninja hoodlums, you now have to face that chopper again, as it circles the train. As the train moves heads toward a tunnel, the chopper flies off, and the action returns to the interior. Watch out for a final hostage situation, before the train pulls into the station.





This here's Rage, premier gun-slinger of Virtua City. Obviously he's shooting along on roller skates or something, judging by the speed at which the background is flying by.



SCENE 2: THIS IS SATURN STREET!

Stepping out onto the platform, you're immediately accosted by more ninjas, one of whom releases a machine-gun. Also look out for the giant VF Sarah billboard (well, you can't really miss it) as you head to the exit escalator. Again, swarms of ninjas await at the bottom of the stairs. Cut them down and you get your path choice for this level.

ARCADE LINE OR SATURN WAY?

What makes this choice so cool, is that it doesn't exist in the arcade version. Stage 3 of the coin-op had no separate paths at all, but AM2 have expanded the game for the Saturn. For now though, we aren't going to reveal what the new path holds. So, onto the Arcade Line...



ARCADE LINE

Heading further into the underground station, you have to confront more ninjas before boarding another train. This ride is even crazier though, as you're pursued by EVL thugs piloting another train and trying to ram you. Soon the trains stop in the tunnel and the villains leap out onto the rails, in an attempt to get to you. Fend them off and you exit the train, taking out some of its remaining EVL passengers before heading down an escape tunnel.



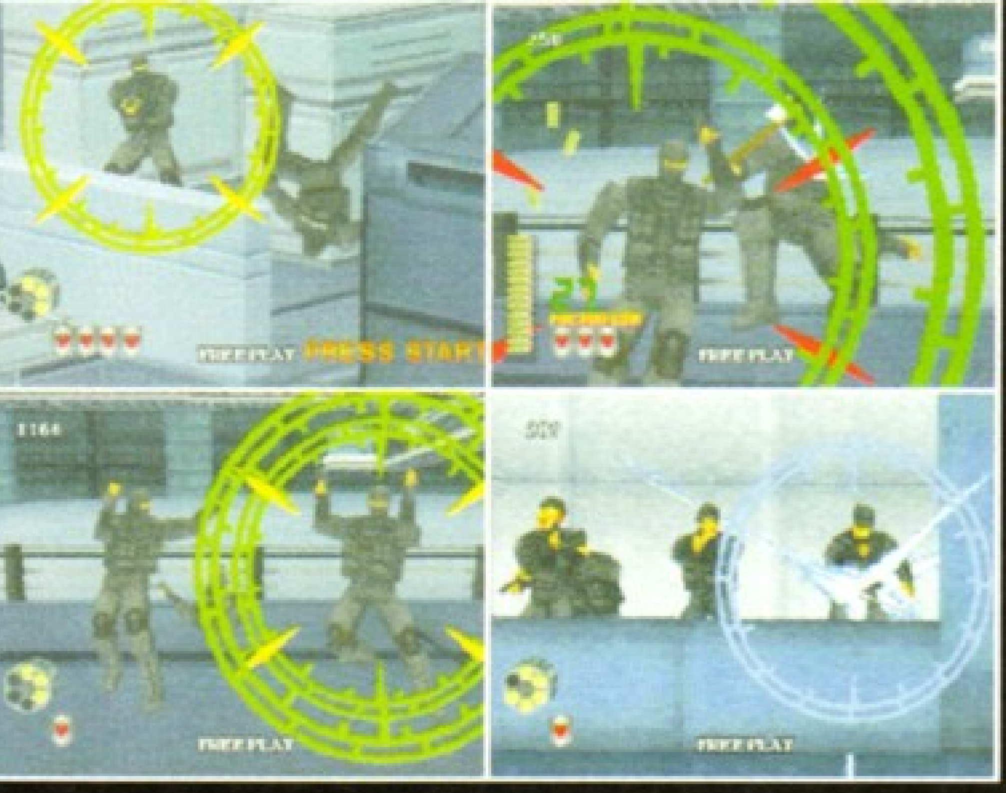


SCENE 3: THE FINAL CONFLICT!

This unmapped subterranean tunnel doesn't lead very far before you drop through an air vent into a much better lit corridor. Clearly there's some foul deeds afoot here. A judgement reinforced by the number of thugs also dropping into the corridor. Once the tunnel is secured, you burst into a large control room. And it's not unmanned, in fact it's overstaffed – with more swill-guzzling crimepigs. While mopping up the dirtbags, look out for a machine-gun hidden in red alert light by the exit.







BOSS 3
"I'LL REMEMBER HOW YOU ARE... AFTER I'VE FINISHED YOU!"

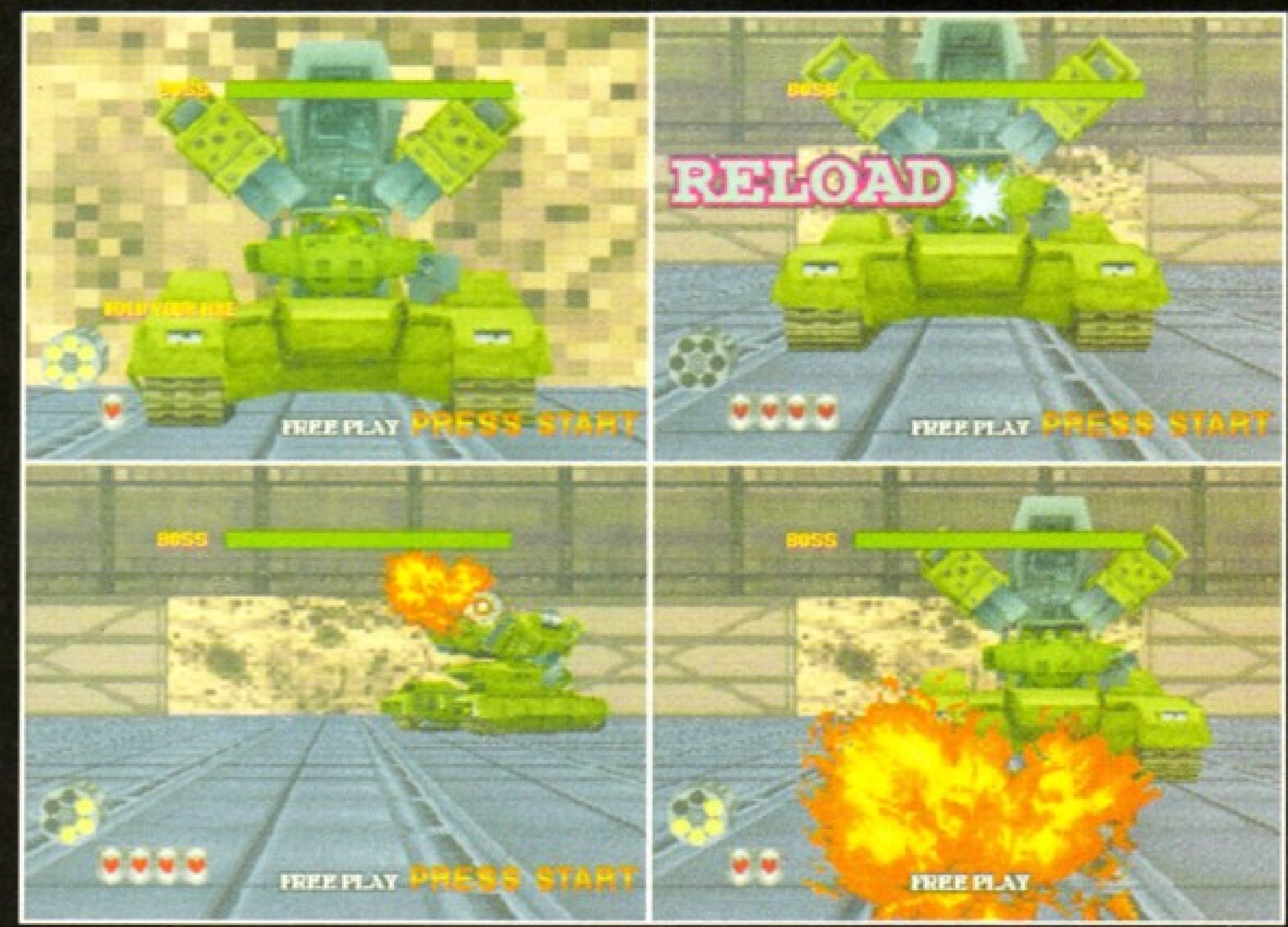
Taking a tip from the first game's EVL kingpin, this crimelord attacks you in a massive tank, loaded with missiles and guns. And just to make sure he's doing a thorough job he often steps on the gas and charges at you.

So, does he herald the end of the game, or is there another boss? Well of course there is. But we're not gonna reveal him yet (arcade experts will know what the true 'final' boss looks like though). In the meantime, hopefully this walk-through has explained why Virtua Cop 2 is so much more of a monumental conversion task than its predecessor.



The exit leads to the most impressive room in the whole game – a massive hangar complete with a Zeppelin airship. This IS the biggest 3D construction we've ever seen in a game, and the camera pans incredibly fast across it, as the Virtua Cops view the situation. This is where some of the most amazing panning and zooming takes place, as you have to shoot at enemies at the far ends of the hangar. Particularly stunning, is a scene when two industrial lifts move across the massively raised ceiling. Taking out the baddies in these is made easier by the fact that they're also transporting explosiving oil-drums. Only one thing could follow this epic hangar stage – the boss!





A feast of action as the Virtua Cops face one of the final menaces of the last level!

THE SCORE MULTIPLIER!

Fans of the original Virtua Cop know it isn't a game that just requires you to wade through to the end in as many credits as it takes. True experts only play in Ranking Mode (one credit, standard difficulty) to see how far and how well they can perform. Most important to this performance, is the uniquely brilliant Score Multiplier system. More on that in a moment. However, first let's talk about Virtua Cop 2's multiplier system, which varies greatly from that of its predecessor.

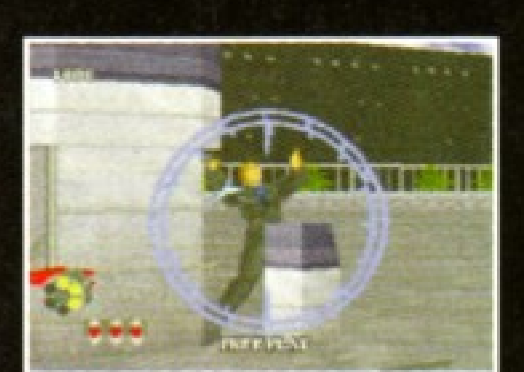
THE VIRTUA COP 2 SYSTEM: THE THREE POINT SHOT!

In V Cop 2, it's not enough to just kill a baddie. Nope, to get full marks from the Virtua PD Gun Academy, you have to plough into each scumbag with the maximum number of shots – three. Nail each thug with a trio of hits and it's recognised with a 'three point score' indicator. Any less and you just get a normal reward, unless of course you perform a Justice Shot (taking out their weapon).

Mastering continuous Three Point Shots is harder than you'd think, because with your basic six-shooter you can only reel off two such attacks (totally accurately) before needing to reload. In a multiple enemy situation (in other words, most of the time), this can prove lethal!



The Virtua Cop 2 targeting system is colour coded. Green and yellow are warnings.



Red mean they're shooting. Blue means the hostile situation has ended.



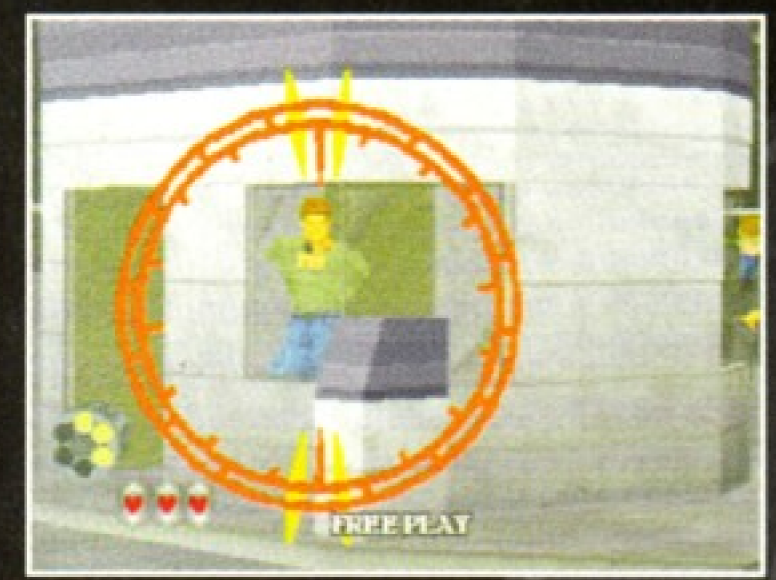
There. Three hits in a row. A Three Point Shot is registered!



The lovely Jane Marshall. She does naff all, apart from drive the squadcar in the chase sequences! And she hasn't got a stupid nickname either... boo!

RANKING MODE

Of course, such different multiplier systems affect the scores greatly. So Virtua Cop 2 also features a Ranking Mode for each play style. Essential since this expert play mode rates all areas of your performance. Even this option is custom-made to suit your shooting style. AM2 just think of everything.



Die!Die you fool! Ahahahahahaha!



Red. You're dead. Yeh sucker, time to visit The Reaper. And the rest of you punks, you drag this sorry scumbag's ass back to Big Joe. And you tell him from me, No one messes with Filthy Barry!

VIRTUA COP SYSTEM: THE BAR MULTIPLIER

The original Virtua Cop's multiplier system differed greatly from that of its sequel. So much so, that the new system may not appeal to fans of the original. Of course, the genius AM2 have considered this possibility and included a Virtua Cop option in V Cop 2. Play the game using this setting and the scoring works identically to that of the first game.

By continually hitting baddies, you gradually fill up a bar at the top-right of the screen. Once this fills, your score is multiplied x2, and the bar resets. By continually filling it, you can increase your multiplier to x9, racking up huge scores. However, get hit or shoot an bystander and your multiplier is lowered. Naturally, this makes the game a nail-biting attempt to avoid ANY mistakes. Here at Saturn Mag we consider this scoring system to be far more exciting than the Three Point system.



Virtua Cop mode is identified by the old targeting system.



It works identically to the V Cop 2 target , but looks simpler.

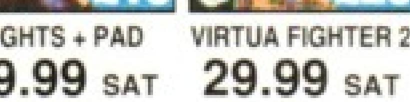


The multiplier bar can be seen at the top. It's currently only on x2.







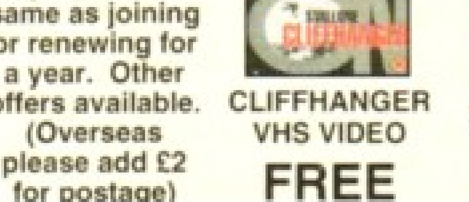
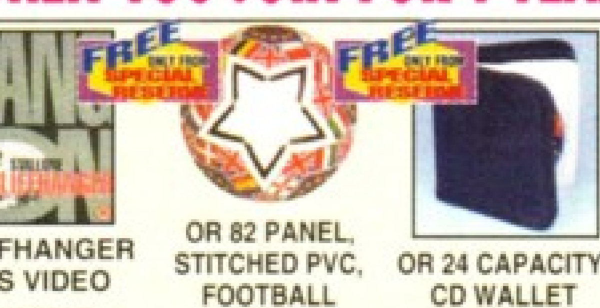






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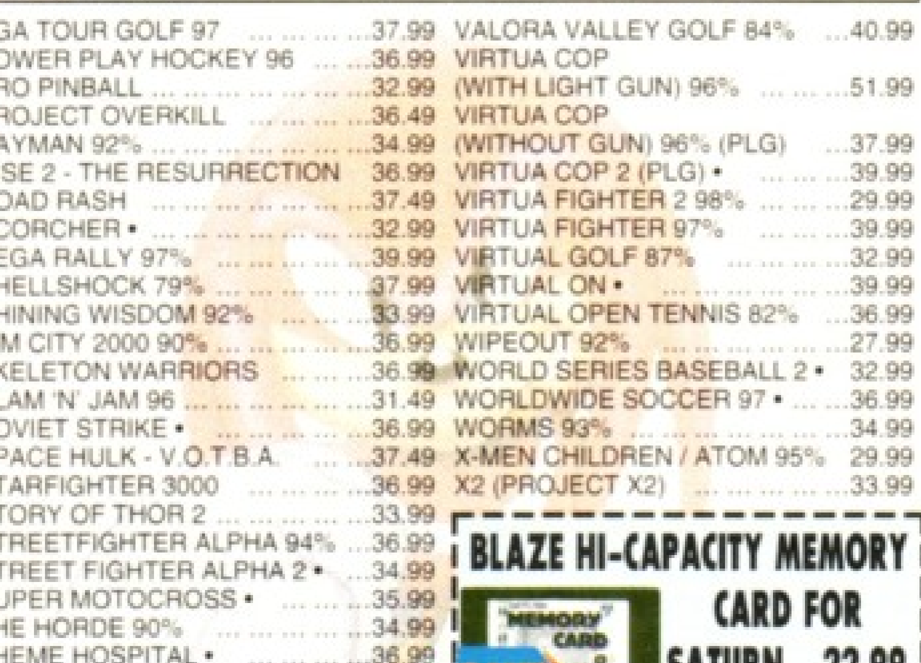
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SSM Lobotomy seem pretty new to the industry - when did you set up your operation and is Exhumed your first game?

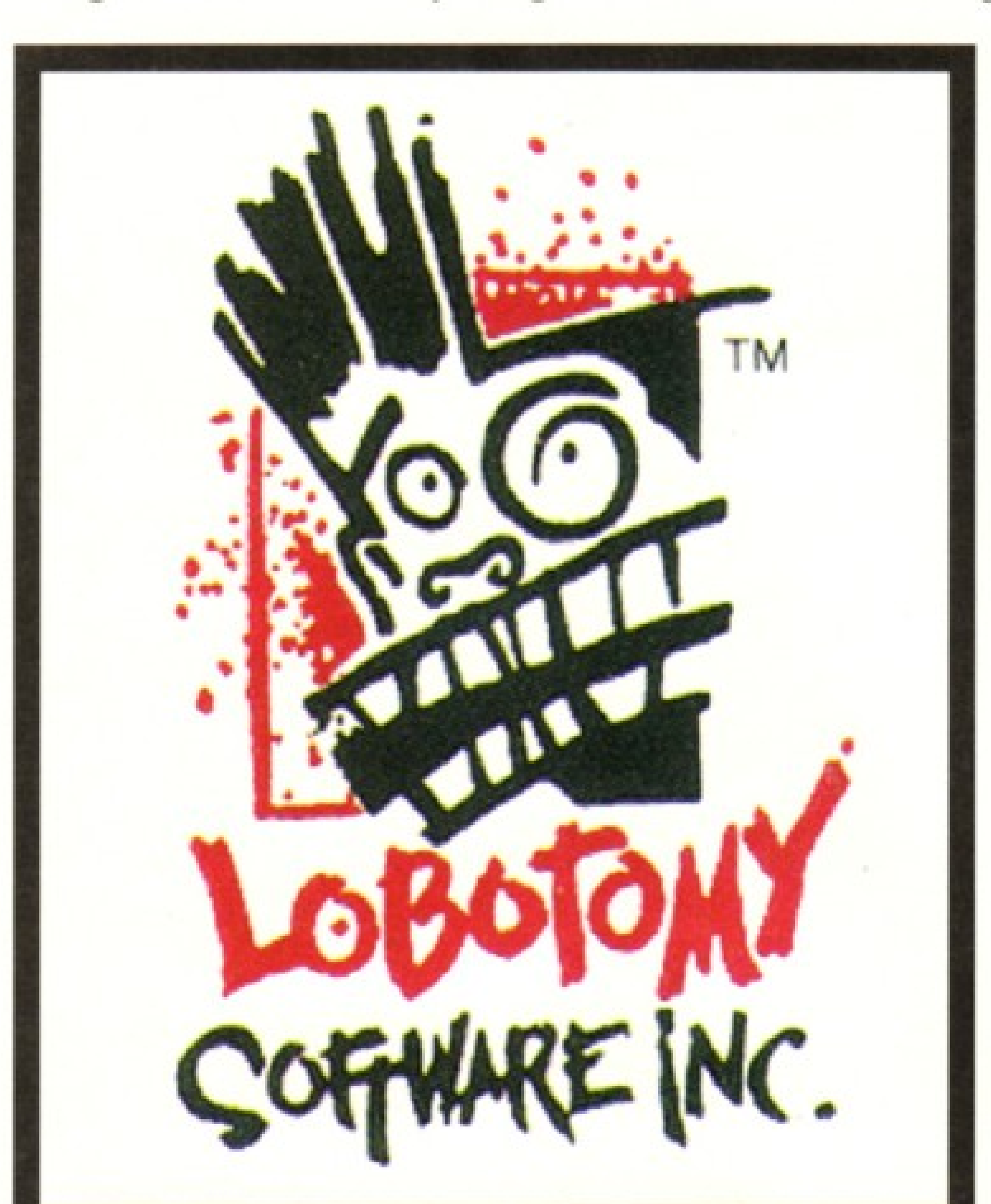
BRIAN McNEELY Paul Lange, myself, and two other friends quit our jobs at Nintendo of America about four years ago to start Lobotomy. We worked out of Paul's apartment for a few months before finding some local office space. With the help of Kevin Chung and Paul Knutzen, we started working on a SNES demo, a boxing game similar to Punch Out!! Although the game was never picked up by a publisher, it helped us get our feet in the door. After a couple of years of demos, CES shows, and Top Ramen, we finally started working on an Egyptian first-person PC game that was originally called Ruins, known now as Exhumed in Europe. The development of this game eventually led to our contract with BMG for the Saturn and PlayStation versions of Exhumed. Exhumed for the Saturn is our first original published title on the market.



A trio of action shots from Exhumed – Lobotomy's first foray into the world of Saturn software.

SSM When did development begin on Exhumed?

BM We started the project in May, 1995.



Lobotomy's logo. They're interviewed on these pages.

SSM What was the first part of the game you developed?

BM As work began on the 3D engine, our art and design teams began putting the framework of the game together on paper. We devoted a few weeks to this until we were happy with all of our concepts. At the same time, David Lawson began modifying and adding new features to BREW, our world editing tool. Paul Schrieber created a tool called Peepshow that we used to set up all of the animations in the game, and Jeff Blazier developed an editor for object placement and ambient lighting. When all of these elements were ready, we started putting it all together to make a game.

SSM Why did you decide to develop a first person blaster?

BM We had a lot of ideas for this genre that we thought would be refreshing for gamers and when we realised that Saturn gamers were in need of a great first person adventure game, we jumped at the chance to provide them with one.

SSM Are you fans of the genre? If so, what kind of dent did the arrival of Quake on PC put in your schedule?

BM Quake has been a ritual around here for a long time, so have Tekken, Tekken 2, Warcraft, Command & Conquer, and many other great titles. We even brought the original stand-up Asteroids back from the dead. We couldn't stay away from it, like a bunch of 10 year old kids competing for high scores, until the machine broke. Now it sits in the basement next to Space Invaders and Robotron, none of which are working any more, still sporting the title that seemed suitable at the time Haemorrhoids. Lately we've been playing Death Tank, a multi-player Saturn game Ezra threw together in his spare time. We play it every day, religiously.

SSM The 3D engine used in Exhumed is by far the best on Saturn. Is it true that the engine is a variation on the Duke Nukem 3D "Build" system? If so, what modifications did you have to make when using the system on Saturn?

EZRA DREISBACH No. The Exhumed engine isn't a port. The whole thing was designed for the Saturn.

SSM Speed seems to be the biggest problem your competitors have in producing this style of 3D game. Was your engine constantly improved during development, or did you have these issues licked right from the beginning?

ED Engine speed was the thing I was most concerned about, so I worked at the start of the project to make it as fast as I could get it. The game was running about full speed three months into the project. Some final tweaking got me about 15%.

SSM Exhumed's system allows for full 3D environments - rooms above rooms and so on - something Doom lacked. How difficult was this to program? Would Exhumed have been even faster if you'd sticked to a Doom-style engine?

ED The motion code was kind of tricky. In the rest of the engine, some parts were harder and some parts easier than writing a Doom engine. A full 3D engine is a better match for the hardware on the Saturn than a strip engine like Doom. I don't think you could make a Doom-style engine that runs as fast as Exhumed on the Saturn.





Exhumed has some pretty funky meanies, not least of which is this enormous boss. The Egyptian theme continues until the end of the game where it becomes obvious that aliens are involved!

SSM There's a lot of flashy special effects in Exhumed - the light sourcing in particular stands out. How were these achieved?

ED I put the dynamic lights in after seeing Loaded on the PlayStation. Each of the wall polygons is being drawn gouraud shaded anyway for the static torch light. As each vertex is transformed the lighting contribu-

tion from the dynamic lights is added in. The algorithm is the fastest thing I could think of that would still look ok.

SSM Is the Saturn well-suited to the first person perspective 3D game, or was in-depth programming expertise required to get the best out of the system?
ED The Saturn is less well suited to this sort of game than the PlayStation. There are limitations on the Saturn's texturing that make the most widely used approaches to some rendering problems impossible to do. The Exhumed engine uses different algorithms that work around these problems.

SSM How did you get the most out of the Saturn's complex dual-CPU and video chip arrangement?
ED I didn't get much use out of the VDP2. It's drawing the parallax sky and the weapons. The main benefit of this is that it frees up VDP1 RAM for other stuff. I would much rather have had the VDP2's RAM attached to the VDP1. I am using both CPUs. One CPU just draws walls, the other does everything else. I'm pretty happy with the way this turned out. The engine runs almost twice as fast in complicated areas using both CPUs.



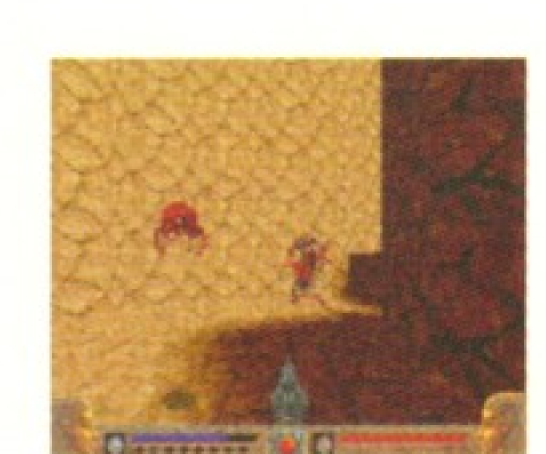
If you haven't bought Exhumed yet, you're mad. GET IT NOW!

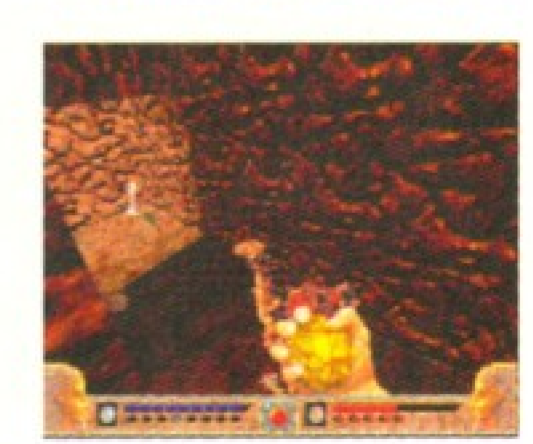
SSM Programming for the Saturn is widely acknowledged as being harder than on PlayStation. As a successful Saturn developer would you agree with this view?
ED For 3D games, I would say that this is true.

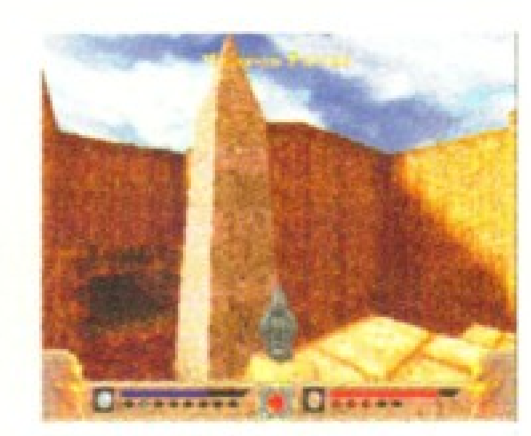
SSM A lot of developers seem to concentrate on producing the PlayStation version of a game first, followed by the Saturn version. Lobotomy have taken the opposite approach with Exhumed. Why was this?
BM We wanted to beat other similar Saturn titles to the market.

SSM Is this way of doing things going to be continued in future Lobotomy games?
BM Definitely.

SSM As experts in the field, just how difficult do you think converting Duke Nukem 3D or Quake to the Saturn would be? What would be the main problems in translating these titles?
ED The main problem with porting these games is that currently they work on engines that are not ideal for the Saturn. The temptation when doing the port is to try to modify the existing engine to run on the Saturn. The result will probably not run as fast as is possible.







Exhumed is bloody amazing. The graphics are just awesome - hence these pics.

SSM Which aspect of Exhumed are you most proud of now that the game has been released?
ED I'm just happy to have a shipping product.

SSM Looking back, is there anything you would have wanted to improve?
ED I would have liked to work more on the monster AI.

SSM What's next for the Exhumed system? Do you plan to use the same technology in a different game?
BM A sequel is being considered, but nothing is set in stone at this point.

SSM What are your plans for producing a new 3D system? Do you believe that Exhumed's graphics and speed can be bettered?
ED The engine could probably be made about 20% faster just with general tightening and more assembly. Also one of my co-workers came up with a way to do more realistic dynamic lighting.

SSM In every way Exhumed can be described as a Doom beater. However, you have not included the multi-player action that Doom was famous for. What was the thinking behind that?
BM We never intended to support multi-play in either of the console versions. Instead, we decided to focus 100% on the single player experience. The PC version of Exhumed supports multi-play, though, and is a blast to play.

SSM Now a link-up cable is available (at least in Japan) and with the arrival of the NetLink, do you intend to include DeathMatch style action in your next game?
BM We would love to.

SSM Do you think there's a danger that people are trying to copy what increasingly more powerful PCs are achieving, as opposed to what the consoles are good at?
BM If there is a danger of this, it is being overshadowed by companies that really know how to benefit from the consoles. Titles like NiGHTS and Crash Bandicoot seem to be taking advantage of what consoles do best, and the Nintendo 64 is paving a new road for console systems as we speak.

SSM Companies such as id software and 3D Realms are specialising in producing first person perspective 3D shooting games only. Is Lobotomy going to follow a similar path or are you seeking to explore different genres?
BM We have a few concepts in the works that fall into other genres than first person.

SSM What can you tell us about your next project?
BM We're still wrapping up the European version of Exhumed for the PlayStation and the American and Japanese versions of Exhumed for the Saturn, PlayStation, Windows 95 and PC CD-ROM. When these are finished, we'll begin to focus 100% on our new project.

SSM What kind of schedule do you have - when will this new game be complete?
BM We plan to have something new available for the 1997 holiday season.

SSM Finally, do you have any message to UK gamesplayers? (apart from "buy our game!")
BM We put a lot of effort into the development of Exhumed, and we hope everyone enjoys playing it as much as we enjoyed making it!

NiGHTS into dreams... CHRISTMAS

Sega have an incredible surprise lined up for Saturn owners this Christmas - an exclusive, incredible version of NiGHTS. And it's FREE! It's also a fine game in its own right - as RICHARD LEADBETTER reveals right here.

We all know that NiGHTS is one of the greatest Saturn games released to date. If you haven't bought it yet (and we know that some of you out there haven't - shame on you), we urge you to go out and purchase it NOW! My colleague Paul Davies describes it as a "Genius Game". And he's right.

So, what's this Christmas NiGHTS malarkey about then eh? Well, get this. Sega Europe have 50,000 copies of a new version of NiGHTS in their clutches. And they're giving it away FREE (kind of, see the relevant box-out). At worst, Christmas NiGHTS could be described as a demo of the full game. At best, it's another revelation from the Sonic Team!

There are loads and loads of brilliant things about Christmas NiGHTS. Unfortunately, we aren't allowed to tell you about a lot of them. Which is probably just as well, because when you find them out for yourself you will be blown away! Suffice to say that Christmas NiGHTS is a great taster for the brilliance of the full game, AND a stunning supplement to that full version, with extra features becoming apparent if game data from the full version is saved on your Saturn.

Confusing? All becomes clear when you see Christmas NiGHTS in all its glory. It's a small game, for sure, a taster of the retail version if you will. But thanks to the superlative presents system contained therein we reckon that you'll have to complete the game at least eight times before you see everything on offer. And even then you've probably missed something.



The Christmas Card style intro shows Claris and Elliot setting off in their quest to find a Christmas Star.





TIME BONUS!

For Christmas NiGHTS to work properly, you need to have installed the battery inside your Saturn and set the date correctly. Then the following happens, dependent on what time of the year you load NiGHTS!





WINTER NiGHTS

Moving into November, the environs of Spring Valley change completely with a whole new visual look to this brilliant set of levels! It's a visual revelation, replete with new bits and pieces you wouldn't have seen before in normal NiGHTS.

CHRISTMAS NiGHTS

In the month running up to December 25, we enter the lovely realms of Christmas NiGHTS. The music switches from the brilliance of CyberSound to a marvellous J-pop rendition of Jingle Bells and the landscapes are alive with little Christmas touches! There's all-new costumes too.

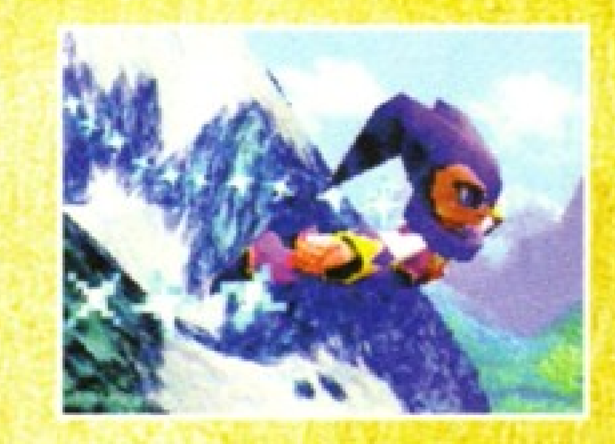


NiGHTS: SHORT VERSION

This is a one level demo of NiGHTS, much like the demo disc we released a couple of months. You get to play Spring Valley with either Claris and Elliot and it's just like the full game! Only you can't get to the other levels. Because they aren't there. All of the other bits are in Christmas NiGHTS.



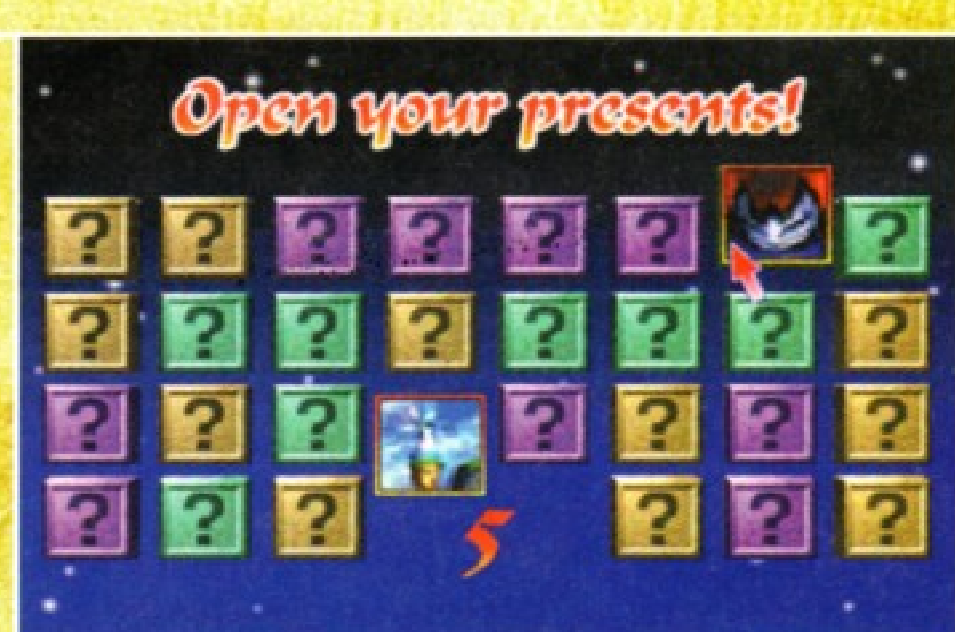
NiGHTS!





I HAVE FELT YOUR PRESENTS

This version of NiGHTS has tons of secret stuff contained within. Every time you complete the four rounds and defeat Gillwing (the boss), you enter a Patience style game. Turn over two cards and attempt to match up the symbols. Every pair you get gives you a lovely present, which is accessed from the opening screens. Supposedly there are 22 gifts to unwrap in all, although there are 24 slots!





KARAOKE MODE

Isn't the NiGHTS soundtrack utterly briiiilliant? Reveal this particular present and you get some excellent replay style camera angles of NiGHTS flying about PLUS the lyrics to the NiGHTS theme tune appearing on-screen. Reminiscent of Daytona's Karaoke Mode. Only better.



NiGHTS MUSEUM

Some of the CG rendered artwork in NiGHTS is absolutely magnificent. Quite a few of the presents in this version of the game show you the various Nightopians and central characters in full-on high-resolution glory. These are the least spectacular presents, but they're still pretty cool.

It's NiGHTS. And he's got a little something for you. Namely 22 briiiilliant presents, including an excellent one for Sonic fans.













HOW TO GET CHRISTMAS NiGHTS

Sega Europe have a limited number Christmas NiGHTS CDs pressed up for the mega-busy selling period. They're being given away free under certain circumstances.

1. BUY A SATURN

Buy a Saturn and you'll get Christmas NiGHTS. Now you can sample the brilliance of Sonic Team's greatest creation to date! You'll want the full game after this...

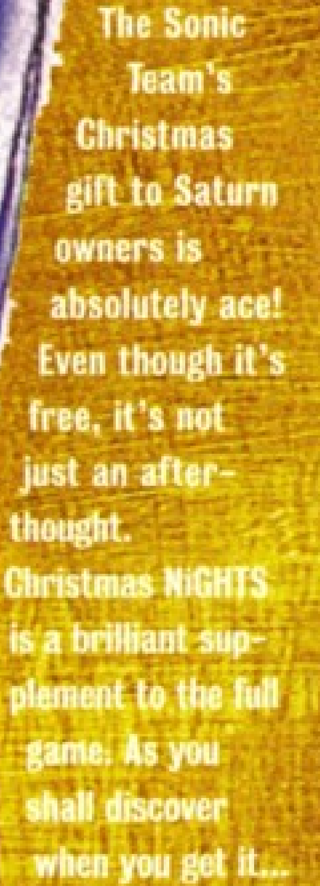
2. BUY GAMES

A mechanism is being put in place at the moment so that current Saturn owners will get Christmas NiGHTS too. This will probably come down to buying software at your local shop, whereupon Christmas NiGHTS will be handed over free - but check with your store for fuller details, because at the time of writing, nothing's been finalised.



LINK ATTACK

This present, once revealed, warps you to the first round (only) of the Frozen Bell level from NiGHTS. Here you can achieve a continuous Link from the start to the finish of the stage, enabling you to rack up a gargantuan NiGHTS score. How high can you try? Hmm.



The Sonic Team's Christmas gift to Saturn owners is absolutely ace! Even though it's free, it's not just an after-thought. Christmas NiGHTS is a brilliant supplement to the full game. As you shall discover when you get it...




BUNDLES OF JOY

Hooray! It's nearly Christmas – that time of year when big corporations bow to the consumer spending power inherent in the season and offer the world to flog you their goods. In Saturn terms this means rucks of all-new Saturn bundles. These are hardware offers featuring various amounts of discounted games as part of a package deal.

Alright, so some stores will still be flogging the console for about seven hundred million quid, but others will do you a Saturn, game, extra joypad, Baywatch star of your choice (including David Hasselhoff) and free money for about ten pence. Well, perhaps that's exaggerating slightly, but there's still a whole wealth of cut-price goodies on the street for the discerning buyer. Although other packs are sad shambling mockeries of shambling parodic travesties. Being the full-on good eggs we are we thought we'd help you negotiate your way through this wallet-slurping quagmire without you having to wear out the soles of your shoes searching for the top bargain.

You see, there's more to bargain hunting than price. Send your dad out for a value pack and he'll probably return with a Saturn, Blazing Dragons, Cyber Speedway and Virtua Hydlide from Kochsoft up the road. As the following guide shows, it's a Saturn-purchasing jungle out there.

Sega Worldwide Soccer '97 is the perfect bundle game! Unfortunately, most packs lack the extra pad required for two-player action!



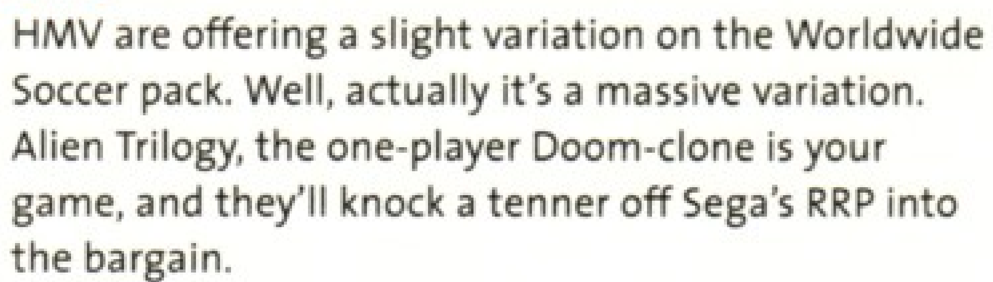




SEGA

Sega's own bundle is showing its little face in shops up and down the nation. It's the usual Saturn-plus-one-pad starter pack, with a copy of Worldwide Soccer thrown in. Not the most generous of gestures, maybe, but a pretty solid multi-player title for Chrimbo day. So don't forget to buy another pad on top of the bundle.

HOW MUCH? £229.99
WHAT'S IN IT? Worldwide Soccer
HOW GOOD IS IT? Not bad at all. As anyone who played the demo on issue #12 will attest. Not the most obvious choice, perhaps, but good all the same.
AVAILABILITY Excellent – it's in just about every shop in the whole world.
VALUE Well.. compared to the original £400 standalone Saturns it's pretty good. But there are better offers around.





Alien Trilogy forms the basis of HMV's pack. Not the best choice of game perhaps, but at least you aren't being sold a bad game.

HMV

HMV are offering a slight variation on the Worldwide Soccer pack. Well, actually it's a massive variation. Alien Trilogy, the one-player Doom-clone is your game, and they'll knock a tenner off Sega's RRP into the bargain.

HOW MUCH? £219.99
WHAT'S IN IT? Alien Trilogy
HOW GOOD IS IT? Good – but it's only one-player so don't expect to get much mileage from it on the big day if there's anything good on telly.
AVAILABILITY Not bad – there are plenty of HMVs around.
VALUE If you're just looking for a basic machine and want to build up your own games collection this is a pretty good shot (or if you want Alien Trilogy, thinking about it). Also, effectively you're getting Alien Trilogy for £20, which is a pretty decent bargain in its own right. Overall, not too bad at all.

DIXONS/CURRYS

Heck, Dixons/Currys just don't know when to stop. Instead of just launching one bundle into the Christmas fray, they've put together five! All of these bundles are available at any branch of Dixons or Currys (which number about 750 nationwide), so they're easy to get hold of. The chain have also taken the novel step of including £100 worth of software discount vouchers with every machine and are offering a six months interest free option on selected Saturn packs (subject to status). So the terms are easy enough, if that's your main consideration. The only common denominator between bundles, though, is Sega Rally, included in all the sets. Let's take a small gander around the Dixons/Currys gallery...



Sega Rally forms the basis of many packages this yule.

DIXONS/CURRYS BUNDLE ONE

HOW MUCH? £229.95
WHAT'S IN IT? Sega Rally, Loaded
HOW GOOD IS IT? Both are class games, although Loaded might not last much longer than the festive season. Still, you can always swap it.
AVAILABILITY As with all the Dixons/Currys packs, excellent. There are rucks of these stores all over the land.
VALUE Better than the Worldwide Soccer number, but you could do better than Loaded.





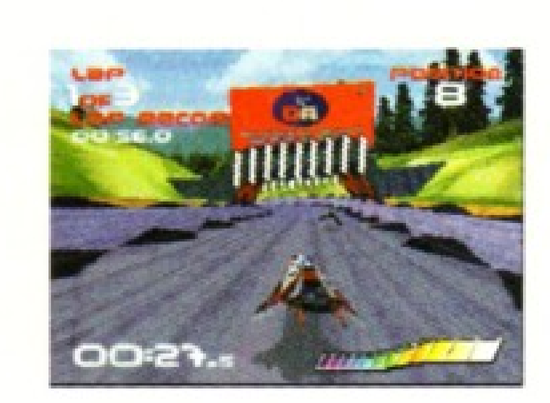
VF2 – arguably the best Saturn game ever and it's the basis of many bundles.

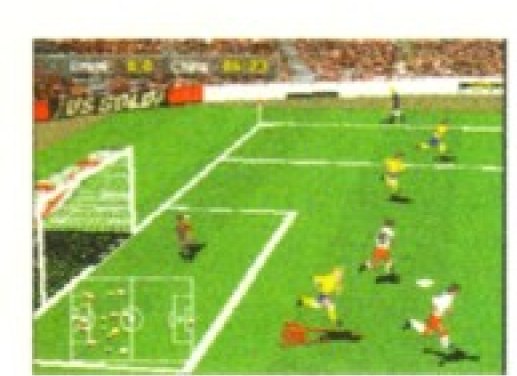
DIXONS/CURRYS BUNDLE TWO

HOW MUCH? £249.95
WHAT'S IN IT? Sega Rally, Virtua Fighter 2, Wipeout
HOW GOOD IS IT? Two smart games, and one much sought-after but not so awesome one. Buy an extra pad to fully appreciate VF2.
AVAILABILITY Excellent.
VALUE Good if it comes to a push – Rally and VF2 are classics. however, it isn't the cheapest bundle on the market.

DIXONS/CURRYS BUNDLE THREE

HOW MUCH? £279.95
WHAT'S IN IT? Sega Rally, Virtua Fighter 2, Wipeout, Arcade Racer steering wheel.
HOW GOOD IS IT? The games are good, but you've really got to want the Arcade Racer to fork out for it.
AVAILABILITY Excellent.
VALUE You're better off getting loads of games before you start on the peripherals, to be honest. The Arcade Racer is fun but it's not essential.





Dixons/Currys are king of the bundles this festive season, with five different offers!

DIXONS/CURRYS BUNDLE FOUR

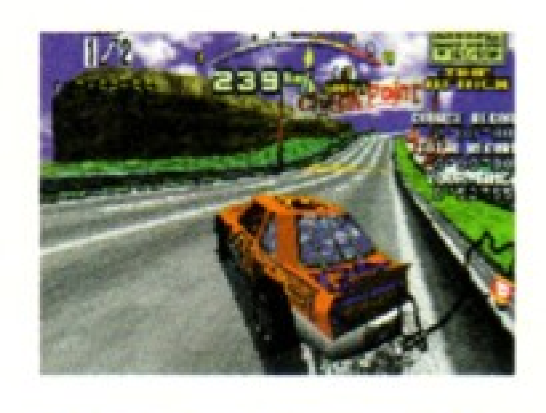
HOW MUCH? £319.95
WHAT'S IN IT? Sega Rally, Alien Trilogy, Olympic Soccer, Arcade Racer, extra joypad.
HOW GOOD IS IT? The extra joypad is a good idea, and the games are all of reasonable quality (although none achieve classic status bar Rally).
AVAILABILITY Excellent.
VALUE Not so brilliant. You could easily pick up these titles second hand for twenty quid each and the Arcade Racer is only for racing fanatics. Also, Rally is the only "Must Have" title in the bundle.

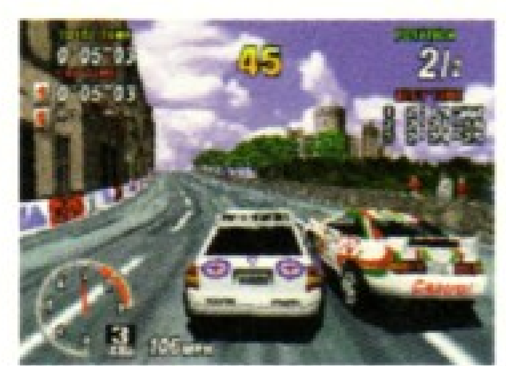





Firestorm: Thunderhawk 2 – in the Dixons £379.95 pack.

DIXONS/CURRYS BUNDLE FIVE
HOW MUCH? £379.95
WHAT'S IN IT? Sega Rally, Virtua Fighter 2, Alien Trilogy, Worldwide Soccer, Thunderhawk 2, Loaded, Arcade Racer steering wheel, extra joypad.
HOW GOOD IS IT? All the games are good. Rally and VF2 are brilliant.
AVAILABILITY Excellent.
VALUE It's a good idea, but you're basically paying 120 quid for four non-essential games and a cacky steering wheel. Looks like more of a bargain than it is.




Sega Rally and Daytona USA team up with Virtua Fighter 2 for Comet's pretty damn cool £249.99 Saturn pack.

COMET

Named after an unsuccessful and dangerous aeroplane, Comet have managed to cobble together a fairly reasonable selection of games. Be warned, the Daytona they're offering is the original version (although that's not really a bad thing). The quality of games just wins out over Toys R Us (see elsewhere), but you're looking at an extra fifty quid for the privilege.
HOW MUCH? £249.99
WHAT'S IN IT? Daytona USA (original), Virtua Fighter 2, Sega Rally.
HOW GOOD IS IT? All three are corking titles, although Daytona is showing its age, especially in contrast to the way superior Rally.
AVAILABILITY Pretty good – there's a Comet in or near most towns.
VALUE Two of the best games ever plus Daytona (which graphics aside is plays BRILLIANTLY). All for just £50 over the basic Saturn price. In a word: excellent.




EB's pack is similar to Comet's, but they can't guarantee VF2 and we'd rather have Daytona than another pack to be honest.

ELECTRONICS BOUTIQUE

They might have a tragic name like something from the late Sixties, but Electronics Boutique know their Saturns. The basic package of Virtua Fighter 2, Sega Rally and a second pad is pretty good going for an extra twenty quid. However, they are having trouble getting hold of enough Fighters, in which case you'll be asked to choose from Digital Pinball, Hi-Octane or any of their second-hand ("pre-owned") titles.
HOW MUCH? £249.99
WHAT'S IN IT? Virtua Fighter 2 (maybe), Sega Rally, another joypad.
HOW GOOD IS IT? With VF2 it's a smart enough.selection. If your local doesn't have it, go for a pre-owned copy of NiGHTS or something to avoid disappointment. Don't pick Digital Pinball.
AVAILABILITY In theory, OK, but shop around for the complete pack.
VALUE Better than the Worldwide Soccer package, although it's an extra twenty pounds. But you do get your money's worth.



TOYS R US

Undoubtedly the king of the bundles, and sure to sell out fast – so get your orders in right now. Toys R Us aren't just waving the lowest price around like some kind of ragged victory flag. They're also offering THREE games – all of them good 'uns – for the dough. Maybe not so great if you hate racing games, and you'll need to buy a second pad to enjoy VF, but this is easily the best of the packs on offer. Well done, you daftly-named chain, you.
HOW MUCH? £197.99
WHAT'S IN IT? Sega Rally, Wipeout, Virtua Fighter 1.
HOW GOOD IS IT? Three top titles. Wipeout's the shakiest of the lot, and it's still smart. You may need to upgrade your Virtua Fighter, though.
AVAILABILITY Toys R Us promise plenty of stocks, but their stores are fairly far between. The only real fly in the ointment.
VALUE As far as price goes Toys R Us are unbeaten. The package of games is a good 'un too, although you should invest your saving in something more recent (such as Fighting Vipers) for best results.


VF2 again. You DON'T get this with Toys R Us. You get the first game instead. In terms of value, TRU rules though.

BUT I'VE ALREADY GOT A SATURN!

Calm down, you whingeing jessies. If you're not bothered about a new Saturn bundle, here's the top ten games we think you should try to wangle into your Chrimble stocking...

NiGHTS
The most exhilarating title on the saturn so far – a brilliantly innovative family game which will keep you going for aaaages.

Fighting Vipers
The funkiest beat 'em up on the Saturn in a while. It might be quite so smooth or complex as VF2, but it's compulsive, intelligent and action-packed.

Massacre hordes of "punks" and "slags" with your light gun. Fun for all the family!

Tomb Raider
One of the biggest, most challenging and best designed games ever written. It looks smart too. Every home should have a Tomb Raider.

Daytona CCE
Say what you like about its relative merits vis a vis the original, Daytona CCE is smart and well worth your attention.

Street Fighter Alpha 2
2D fighting games can be fun, and Street Fighter Alpha 2 certainly is. That's what Simon Mayo would say about it, and I'm not going to argue. It's ace.

Shining Wisdom
The source of more calls to our office than if we'd mounted a live hand grenade on the cover of our last issue. A puzzle/RPG tour de force.

Virtua Cop 2
Pop pop, watch them all drop.

Worldwide Soccer '97
Depth of playability is the key here, and Worldwide Soccer is deeper than a big crevasse at the bottom of the ocean.

Exhumed
The best Doom-style game the Saturn has seen. In fact it's better than Doom.

Night Warriors
We might have reviewed it aeons ago, but it's only just come out. A storming, spanking, not-shambling mockery of a parodic travesty game. Hurrah!



Look out for your free copy of Christmas NiGHTS – see page 50 for full details.



CLAIM YOUR FREE CONSOLE CARRIER WHEN YOU BUY THE MOST OUTRAGEOUS SATURN PACK* FROM Dixons OR Currys!

Dixons and Currys have approached us - SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE - to present this great value offer. As you can see from the "Bundles of Joy" feature this month, both chains are offering the Most Outrageous Saturn Pack around* - a veritable festival of Saturn hardware and software (pictured above), all for a the sum of £379.95, saving a huge £114!

Well, with this fine issue of SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE, the value festival becomes even more intense, because by using one of the fine vouchers on these pages (pass the others on to your mates if you want), you can claim an extra freebie - the ultra-cool Sega Saturn System Bag, worth £19.99 when bought from Dixons or Currys!

This portable Saturn receptacle is a record bag style affair - soft, padded and hyper-durable (with shoulder strap and carry handle), it has been described by some as "the ultimate holdall for your Saturn, games and accessories". So by all accounts, it's pretty big too.

So... get down to your local Dixons or Currys SuperStore now!

GET YOUR FREE CONSOLE CARRIER WHEN YOU BUY THE MOST OUTRAGEOUS SATURN PACK* FROM Dixons OR Currys

Voucher valid until 31/12/96. Only one voucher can be used per purchase. This cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer. No cash alternative. Stores to discount 061433 to zero pence using reason code 4.

GET YOUR FREE CONSOLE CARRIER WHEN YOU BUY THE MOST OUTRAGEOUS SATURN PACK* FROM Dixons OR Currys

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* The "Most Outrageous Saturn Pack" includes Sega Saturn, additional joypad, Arcade Racer, Sega Rally, Virtua Fighter 2, Alien Trilogy, WorldWide Soccer, Thunderhawk 2 and Loaded (software titles might vary).

DAYTONA RALLY

It's about 15 months since Daytona USA was released on Sega Saturn. And despite the brilliant gameplay, there has been much uncontrollable wailing and gnashing of teeth. Surely the Saturn is capable of better? Well, combine Daytona USA with Sega Rally and 32X Virtua Racing Deluxe and you have... Daytona Championship Circuit Edition. Words and pictures by RICHARD LEADBETTER.

It sounded too good to be true. Sega Rally showed the world just how great the original Daytona USA could have been. It was visually super-close to the arcade game and played identically. So, getting the CS Team to do their own version of Daytona should have resulted in a conversion just as close eh? Well, maybe. Except it hasn't.

You can read the full review later on, but suffice to say that the CS Team have decided to go their own way and have deviated from the precepts of the original arcade game in many different areas - hence the mention of VR Deluxe on the 32X.

In many ways this is a bit of a blessing in disguise as far as writing a colossal eight page showcase goes, since it means that we have a whole lot more to write about, not just reiterating what was wrote when we did the original Daytona USA showcase many moons ago in the original SEGA MAGAZINE.

In fact, just about the only aspects of the original Daytona that do remain similar in the new game are the old courses. Everything else is different. The cars are all-new, there are some newly-crafted tracks to get to grips with and the range of options and what-not is very, very similar indeed to what the CS Team achieved with Sega Rally. It's got a Ghost Mode, split-screen two-player mode and everything. Heck, even the handling of the cars - the way the thing drives - is completely different to what has gone before (similar to VR Deluxe).

And now, stay with us, as we explore the game still further in the now-established in-depth Showcase stylee.

Daytona CCE is reviewed on page 68

DELUXE



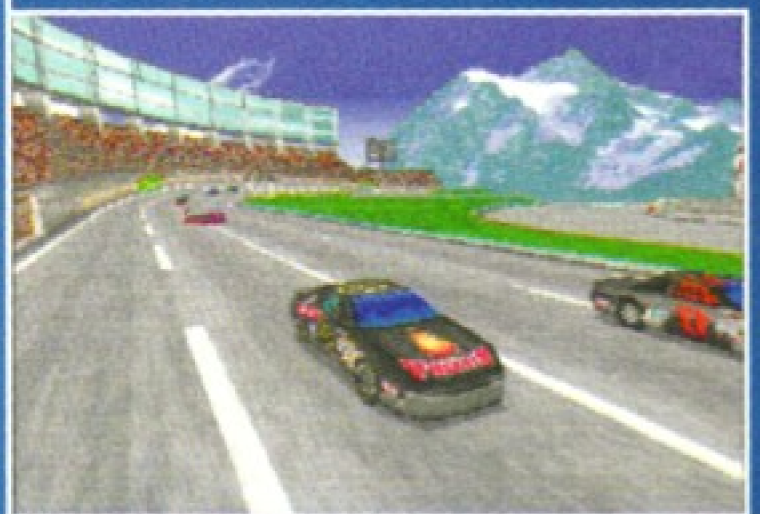
Full-on racing action all the way in Daytona CCE. A close contest at Desert City (left) and some National Park Speedway high-velocity racing (below).

A sweeping angle showing the last chicane at Seaside Street Galaxy (above) whilst the Oriole still searches for any sign of a "city" in the Desert City track (right).

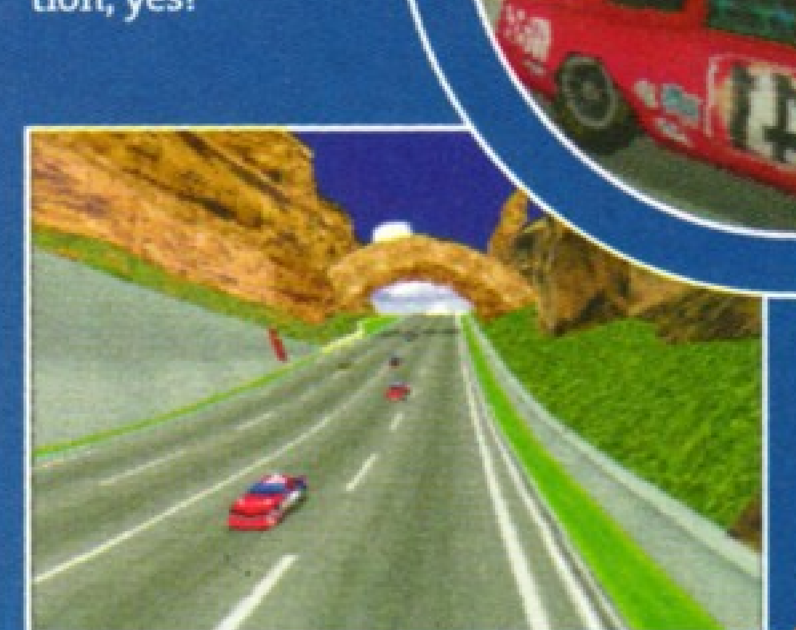


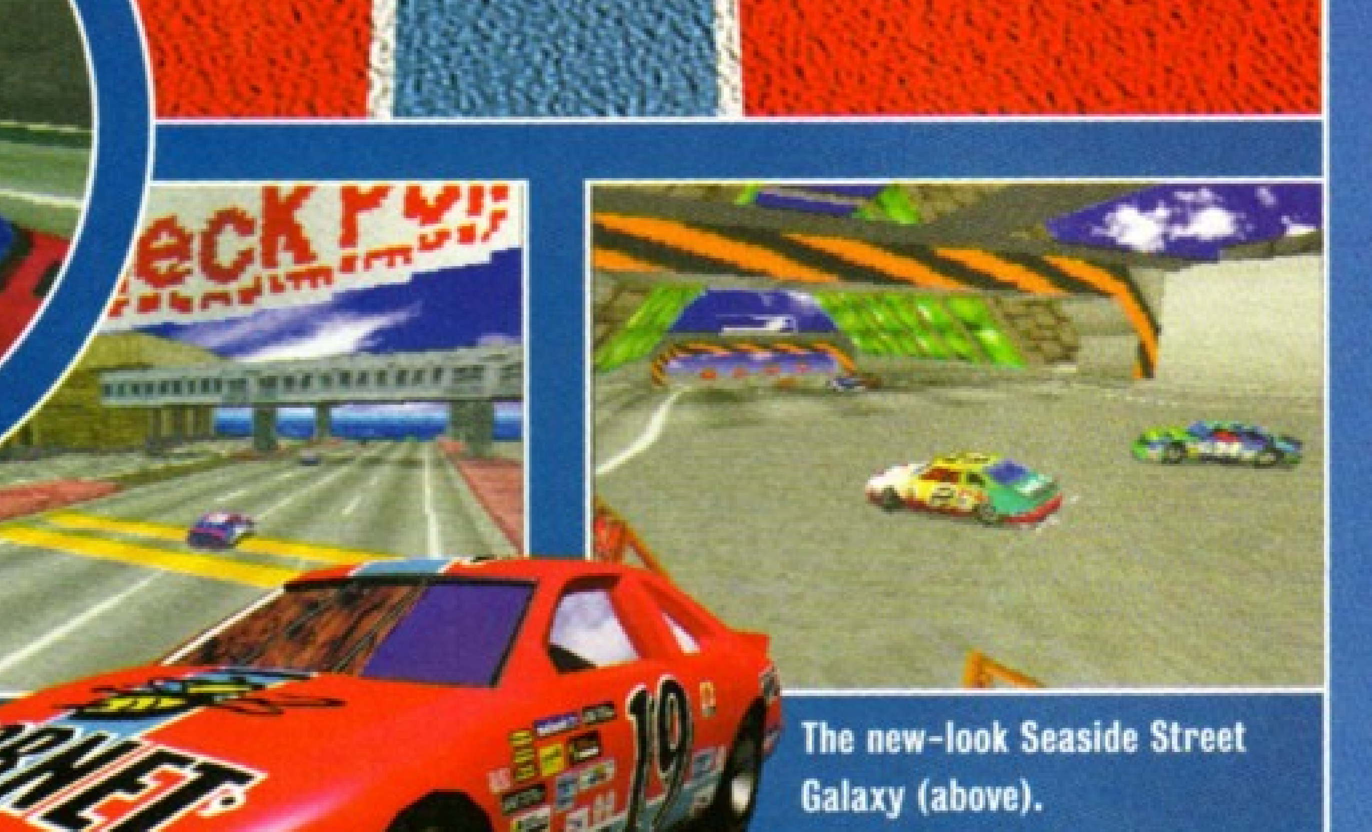
LET'S SEE THAT ONCE MORE

Daytona USA was somewhat lacking in the replay department, and when you did complete a course, the sweeping panoramic views were spoiled by some outrageous clipping and slowdown. Daytona CCE sets that all to rights with a full replay available should you complete the course in the top five. That's on Normal racing mode. Should you opt for the Grand Prix or Endurance races, there's just too much data for the Saturn to remember. So you don't get one. Still, to witness (and indeed re-witness) your previous moments of triumph from a variety of camera angles, the replay mode is well worth investigation, yes?









The new-look Seaside Street Galaxy (above).

HOW DO THE TRACKS LOOK?

777 SPEEDWAY

The simplest of the original tracks in Daytona USA, this was the track with the least amount of clipping - apart from the Sonic Wall. It's loads, loads better in Daytona CCE.





After the Sonic Wall, the Fruit Machine is the centrepiece of the 777 Speedway. The new Daytona (right) benefits from more polygons making up the rock walls and many more surrounding trees.





Supposedly the main entrance to the track, this is never actually used or even seen in the race proper (unless you spin off madly). Still, the empty black hole of the original Daytona is gone. It's a real tunnel now!





The most memorable section of the 777 Speedway is the Sonic Wall. In the original Daytona it was a pop-up nightmare. The new version is loads better and there are many more trees (which hide some clipping!) and better fences.

DINOSAUR CANYON

One of Daytona's more ambitious tracks, the Dinosaur Canyon in the original version had huge amounts of detail, but had some notorious clipping.





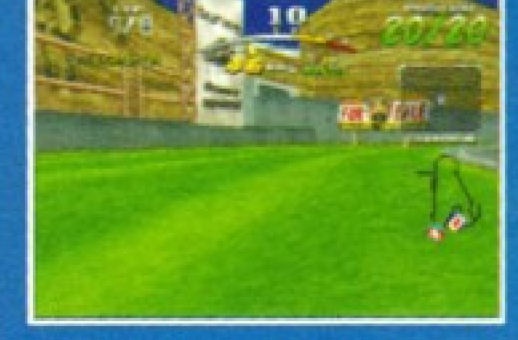
The canyon surroundings on the original Dinosaur Canyon were very shortsighted and popped up most unconvincingly (left). It's a completely different story in Daytona CCE, as you can see (right).





Moving into the tunnel of the track, the original version put the whole car in shadow even when you went past the windows. This has been rectified in Daytona CCE, plus the lighting is more animated.





The big landmark of this track is the enormous fossilised dinosaur. A lot of detail has been spared in CCE (the tail's completely gone!) but the clipping is far better. Some evidence of compromise here, but overall the new track's far better.

SEASIDE STREET GALAXY

The original Daytona really wheezed when it came to rendering this track at speed. Clipping was also a major problem. How have CCE's coders worked around these problems?





This section right after the bridge slowed down greatly on the original Daytona (left), and CCE's programmers have been forced to reduce the detail on the intricate backgrounds (right). You don't really notice.





This section remains pretty much as it was in the original. The overall clipping effect is better, and the redrawn mountainside is pretty impressive - just as it was in the Dinosaur Canyon.





This was the most horrific clipping nightmare in the original Daytona and there was plenty of speed loss. A total redrawing festival has occurred. A lot of detail is lost (where are the shuttle booster rockets?) and the fence is poor. But it's very fast.

A TALE OF THREE CONTROLLERS

Being a driving game and being converted from an arcade machine controlled primarily with a steering wheel, Daytona CCE is ripe for some compatibility with the myriad controllers available for the Saturn. So, how does the game play with each of these wonders? You're about to find out.

1. JOYPAD

Everyone's got one of the ordinary joypads and on the original Daytona, it was brilliant - far superior to the Arcade Racer. On Daytona CCE, it is initially very heavy, the car not being half as slidable as in the original. Some heavy slamming on the anchors is required to power-drift, and this is the key to success. I completed it with the joypad fairly easily.

2. ARCADE RACER

The steering wheel sold when Daytona USA first appeared on the Saturn. I've never been a fan of the Arcade Racer and my feelings haven't changed with the arrival of Daytona CCE. It's just too big and chunky with no feedback. Better at powersliding than the joypad (marginally), but I'd still prefer a normal pad or the NiGHTS controller..

3. NiGHTS ANALOGUE CONTROLLER

Great choice of controls - the shoulder buttons underneath the pad control the accelerator and brakes. You can even use the digital pad for the options. The analogue response is brilliant and power-sliding is very good. Definitely the preferred controller for Daytona CCE, although response is extremely precise. Sometimes you think it's a roller-skate you're controlling, not a stock car. I would say that playing Daytona CCE is a lot, lot better with the NiGHTS pad. Buy one. Now. And if you haven't got NiGHTS buy that too.



The new tracks in Daytona don't really look much the old ones. The style is completely different. In our learned opinion, the National Park Speedway (above) has probably got more in common with the Isle of Man course in Manx TT SuperBike!



Dinosaur Canyon looks really cool now...



... And the tunnel lighting is excellent.





DAYTONA: BEFORE AND AFTER

Daytona USA has received a radical facelift in order to keep the speed up and reduce the awful clipping of the original. For the most part, the redrawn tracks are far superior in terms of look, but for a more complete examination look at the examples on the left of this spread.

PAL TRANSLATION

Not much effort went into Daytona USA's original PAL translation. Even the NTSC version had borders and these were super-exaggerated when converted to PAL. Daytona CCE is a lot better. Not only is it a lot smoother, but it's full-screen too. Probably the best PAL translation EVER, alongside Virtua Fighter 2 of course. Look at the pictures above for a comparison.

VR VIEWS

From the cars of Virtua Racing, 3D driving games have benefited from a choice of viewpoints. That's the beauty of 3D, see? You can view the action from any perspective! Daytona CCE has four views, just like the original, although the CS Team have tweaked the perspectives slightly. They don't look quite as dynamic, although in terms of viewing what's actually going on, they're significantly better.

VIEW ONE



The "bumper" view. The perspective is from the very front of the car, looking slightly upwards. You get a very dramatic sense of speed with this view.

VIEW TWO



The interior "cockpit" view. You get to see the bonnet of the car in front of you (plus any battle damage). Not much different from view one, particularly.

VIEW THREE



The typical chase car perspective pretty much sums up view three. This is the default perspective the game gives you. Not bad at all.

VIEW FOUR



A kind of helicopter view, behind and above the player's car. It's not that far behind, with its big overall coverage making this view the best.



A nice rollercoaster...



Some cool mountains...



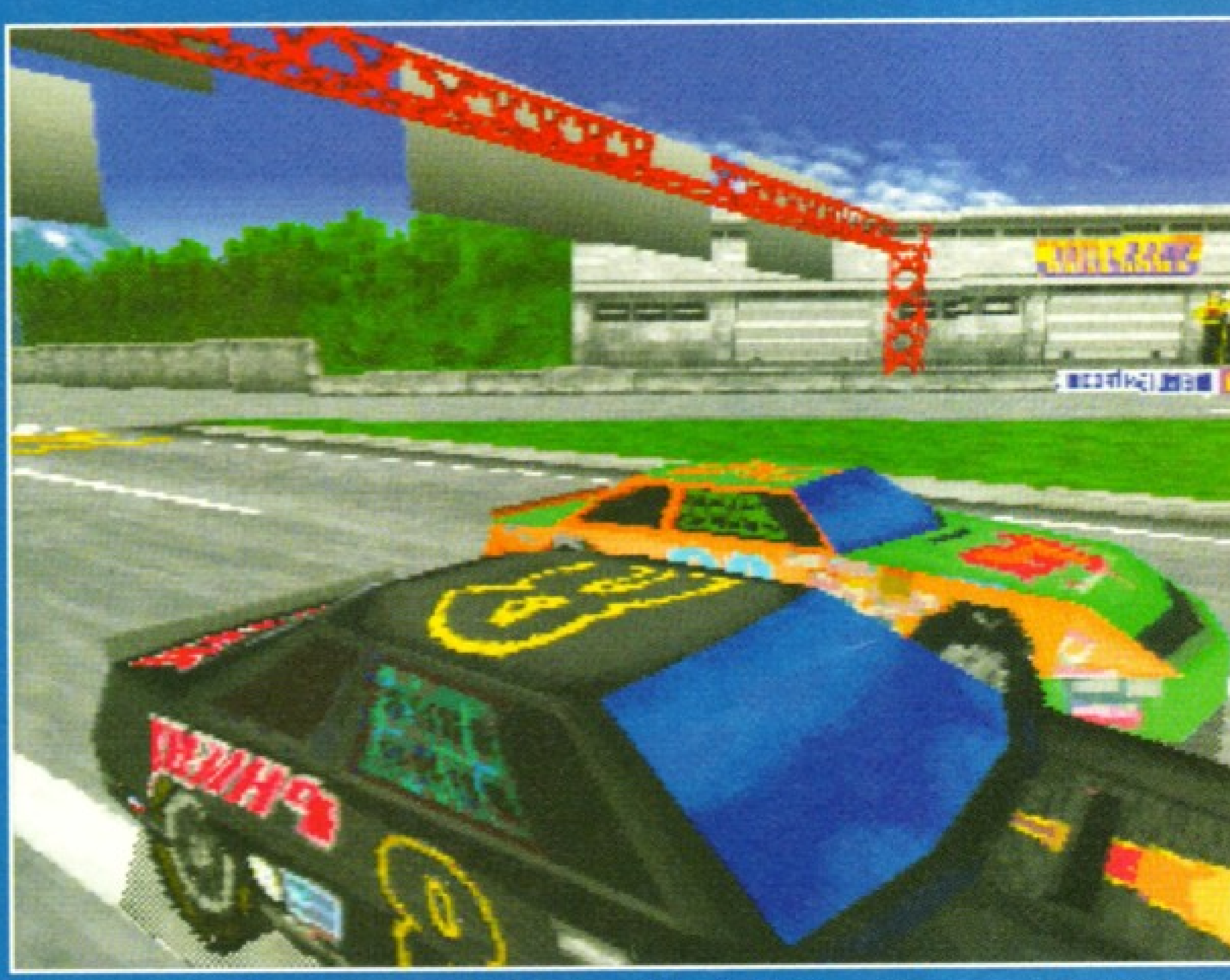
And even a sort of dead end.





TWO CAN PLAY AT THIS GAME

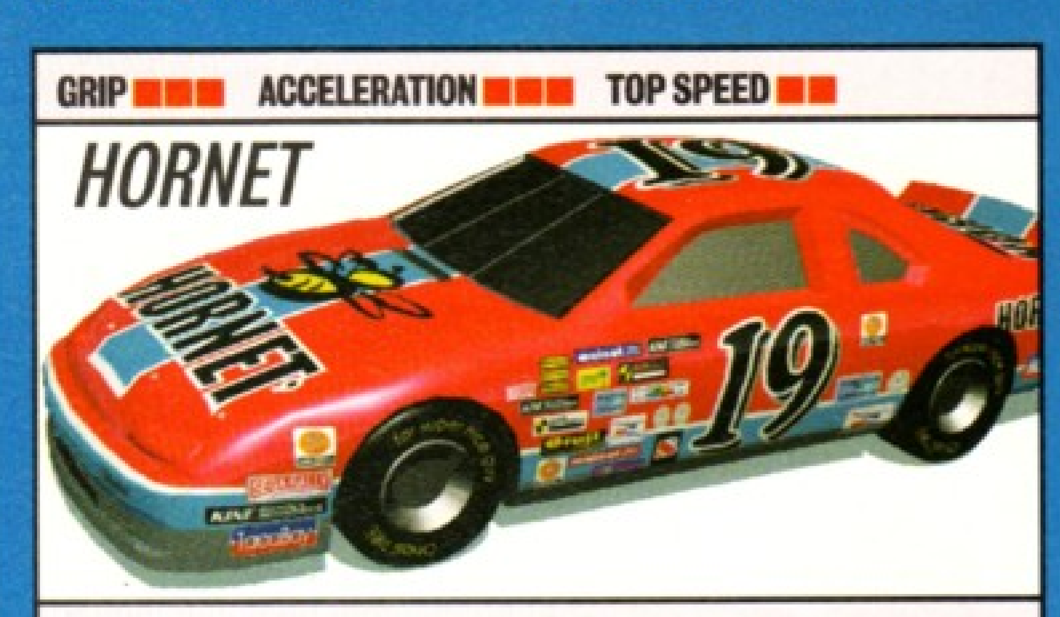
Another big moan with the original Daytona was the fact that brilliant gameplay aside, it was something of a solitary experience. There was no split-screen or link-up modes whatsoever, meaning that any competition had to be along the lines of fast lap times or whatever. It's all change in Daytona CCE with a Rally-style split-screen mode and a more finely realised Time Attack feature. Although the graphics suffer in two-player mode, it's still good fun, and options such as a headstart for one player and a slower car boost increase the competitive element still further. Lovely.



A close contest on the new, improved 777 Speedway (above), with dramatic views courtesy of the game's newly installed Replay mode. The player has chosen to use the Phoenix car – definitely the four-wheeled equivalent of the Reliant Robin. It's rubbish.

GRIP ■■■ ACCELERATION ■■■ TOP SPEED ■■

HORNET



This car is supposed to represent the original arcade car, hence the name. The Hornet is best described as average in just about every regard, although its top speed is disappointing at times. To be honest, there isn't really much call for this car in the tracks on offer.





GRIP ■■■ ACCELERATION ■■■ TOP SPEED ■■

GALLOP



Just like the Hornet, this car's name draws comparisons with the cars from the original Daytona, although it's far less responsive when it comes to power-sliding. Virtually identical to the Hornet, it suffers from the same problem – not being good enough at anything, really.





GRIP ■■■■■ ACCELERATION ■■■■■ TOP SPEED ■

MAX



Despite the stats, the Max is positively the best car for just about the entire game. Acceleration is far more important than top speed, with the Max positively burning up all competition on every track bar Dinosaur Canyon. In many ways, the game would be better without this "cheat" car.









Although its looks are nothing like the original Daytona cars, the Oriole is probably the closest you'll get in terms of handling. Its loose grip makes for some exciting power-sliding, with acceleration and top speed making for a most comfortable show of performance. A great choice for Dinosaur Canyon.







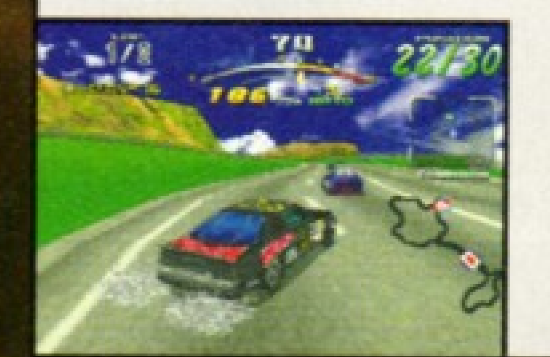
Although it statistics seem to rank the Magic as one of the average performers, it's actually a pretty impressive vehicle. Great at corners, and holding its own in terms of speed, its only problem becomes apparent when you start the race or take a corner badly - its acceleration is dull.







On paper, the combination of maximum power in terms of top speed and acceleration makes the Phoenix look like a most interesting vehicle. In actual fact, its grip is so bad, you spend most of the time trying to avoid wheelspins. A complete dogs' dinner of a car. Absolutely awful.





SECRETS OUT

The original Daytona USA contained a huge amount of secrets to discover, including a horse to guide around the tracks! Since Daytona CCE comes from the same coders as the secret-packed Rally, you can expect tons of hidden things to discover in this new game. And we've already found two of them - a duo of new vehicles which should look pretty familiar. In addition to this, we'll bet our bottom dollars that a Mirror Mode is in there somewhere. Stay tuned to our tips section for a full expose over the coming months.







The pit crew still haven't developed proper feet – a trait left over from the original Saturn translation of Daytona USA.



Question: why choose the Wolf, when the Max has the same acceleration, top speed and better grip? Hmmmmmm, errr, yes. Good question. A sleek red car, the Wolf is probably going to be good enough to win you a few races, but its similarity to the Max is very close. And quite frankly, it's not as good.







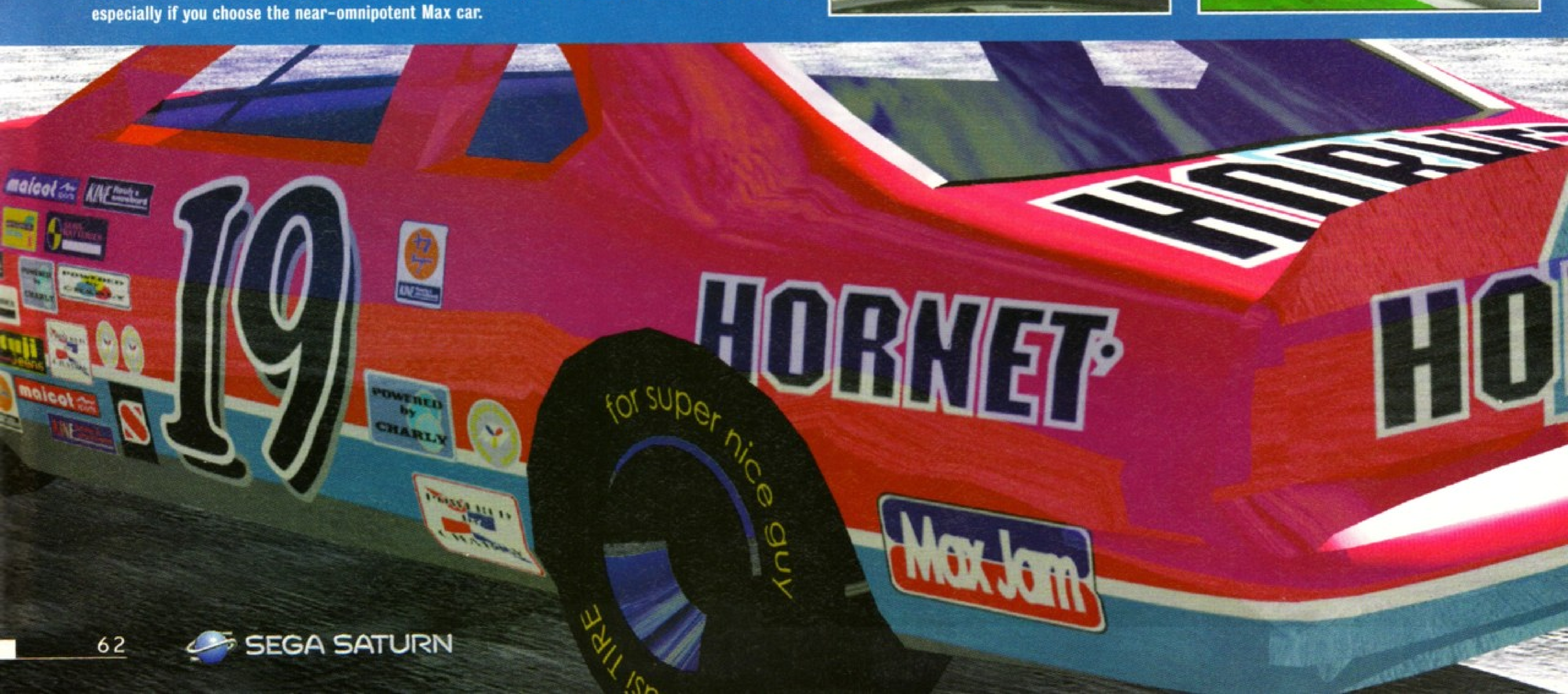
The Balance is a great example of why acceleration is so important in Daytona CCE. Its overall statistics are impressive, but its lack of acceleration severely dents its performance on every track bar the 777 Speedway. In fact, why bother with any car when the Max positively destroys the CPU opposition?



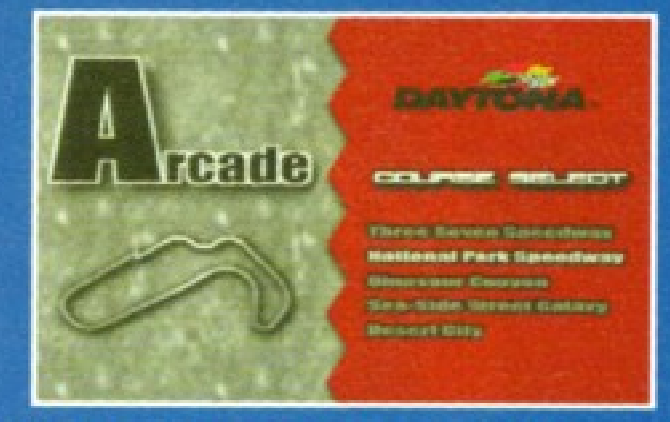




Taking control of the Gallop car (similar only in name to the original Daytona car), the player accelerates into the first tricky section of Seaside Street Galaxy. You should be pleased to discover that the horrifically tight corner just ahead is actually a lot easier to take in Daytona CCE, especially if you choose the near-omnipotent Max car.



NEW DAYTONA TRACK #1:
NATIONAL PARK SPEEDWAY



Anybody who saw Damon Hill streak to victory and claim the F1 World Championship might recognise some of the scenery from Suzuka in the National Park Speedway. The track itself is nothing like it, but the main scenery of note in this track is an enormous roller-coaster and a Ferris Wheel, which Murray Walker used as scenery when reporting on the qualification round before the main race. The former landmark is quite noteworthy in that you can see the cars travelling around the track, looping the loop and what-not.

The actual track itself is designed to be of intermediate difficulty between the original Daytona's 777 Speedway and Dinosaur Canyon. Just about the entire course can be taken at top speed, bar one corner just after you pass the rollercoaster. There's also a small section which seems to be very similar in look to parts of the Mountain Course in Sega Rally. Although there are a number of bends in this sector of the track, cunning driving means you can still take them all at top speed.

SECTOR 1: THE START

The start of a typical National Park Speedway race is a pretty straightforward affair. Power through the start flag, take a simple right turn then watch out for a sudden dead-end. The road inexplicably switches suddenly to a mountainside track on the right. It's not too much of a problem to overcome this particular hazard.

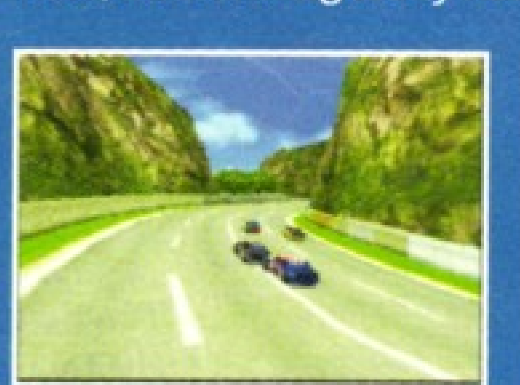




SECTOR 2: THE MOUNTAIN

The track is suddenly surrounded by mountains and you're forced to make your way through what looks very much like your average S-Bend. As the mountain to the left is cleared, the Ferris Wheel comes into view.

There's a couple of crash possibilities here, but nothing really hazardous.





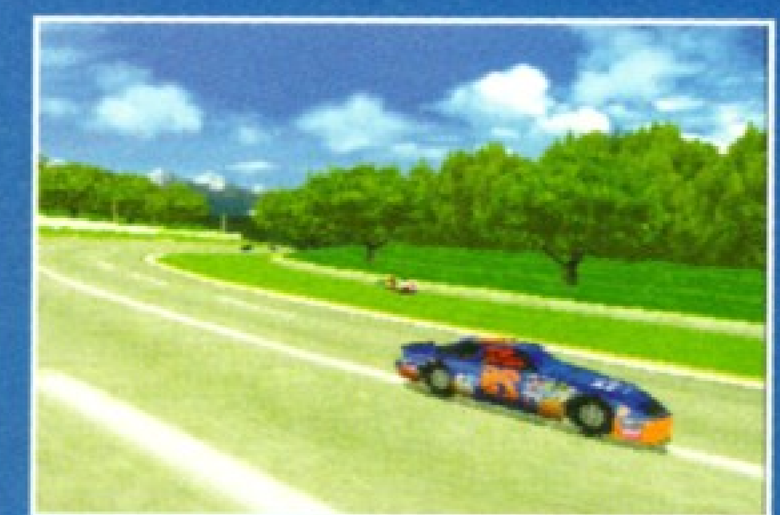


SECTOR 3: THE ROLLERCOASTER

With the mountains clearing to the right, the track enters a pleasant grassy area. There's still a sheer drop to the left (although it's walled off) and you can witness the full splendour of the rollercoaster. The last bend before the start of the lap requires much brakage and a good powerslide if you are to be successful.

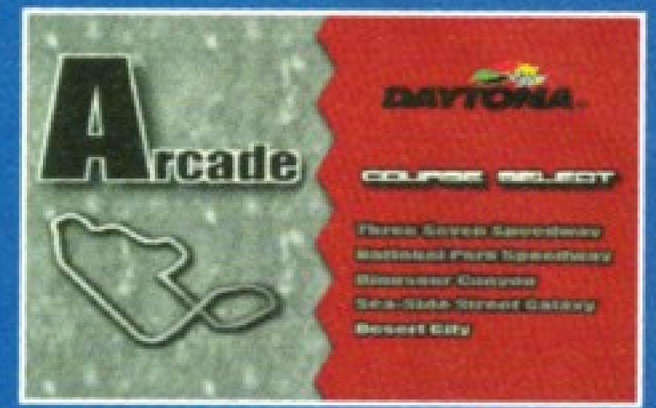


The individual rollercoaster cars speed around the track in the background. There are no moving backdrop objects in the original trio of Daytona courses.



Pitched in difficulty directly after the 777 Speedway, this new course is actually pretty easy with only one or two corners designed to give any problems.

NEW DAYTONA TRACK #2:
DESERT CITY



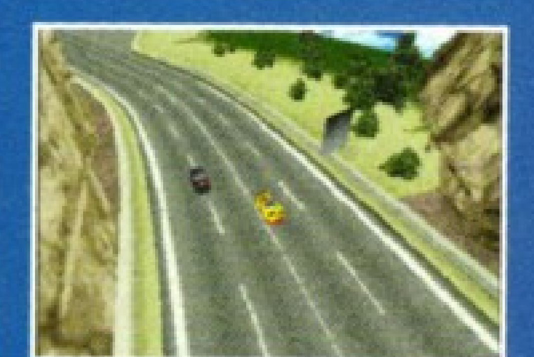
Desert pretty much sums up this particular track, although where the designers got the idea that there might be a city around remains unclear. Because there isn't one. At all. There aren't even that many buildings to be honest. What there are includes mountains, tunnels, and a huge freight train that makes use of said tunnels. Gauged in difficulty terms to be harder than Sea Side Street Galaxy by the CS Team, Desert City isn't really that difficult to master at all. The track simply demands that you have a good awareness of how to powerslide - if you have this skill, negotiating the 90 degree turns that proliferate Desert City should be pretty easy. One hazard that is something of a pain is the dirt that surrounds some of the harder corners. If you fail to take such a turn well, it's difficult to regain traction and precious seconds are lost forever. Unless you restart the race.

SECTOR 1: THE START

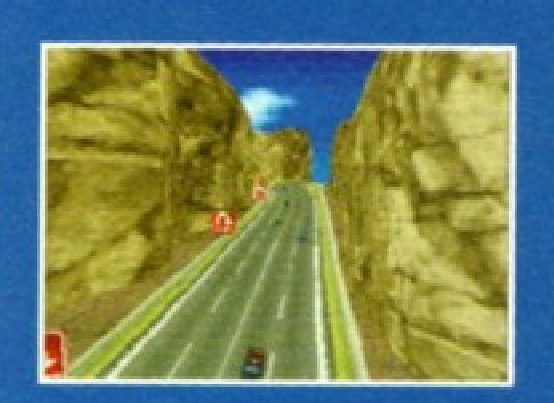
A freight train disappears into a tunnel ahead of you as you scream into some pretty claustrophobic canyons (kind of like the end of the difficult Virtua Racing track) which gives you a steep turn followed by an S-Bend. Things are tough right from the start!







In Replay Mode (where these pictures were taken), you can get some spectacular views - and the clipping's pretty decent too.

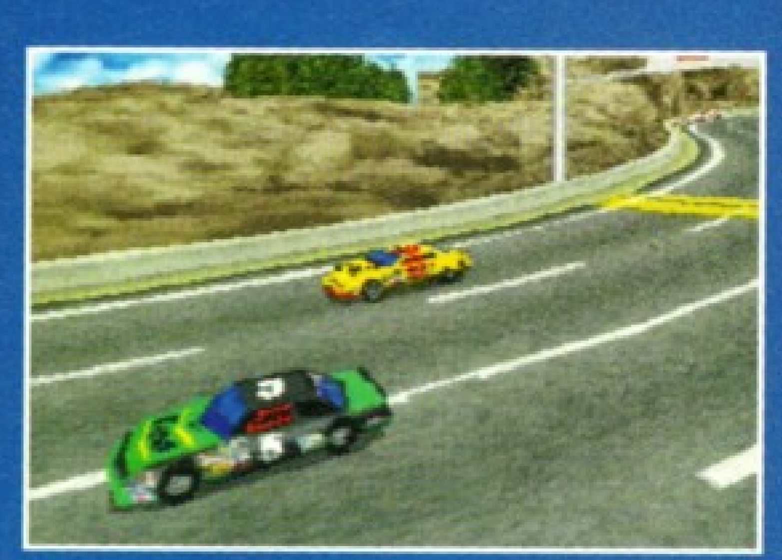




SECTOR 2: SHEER DROP

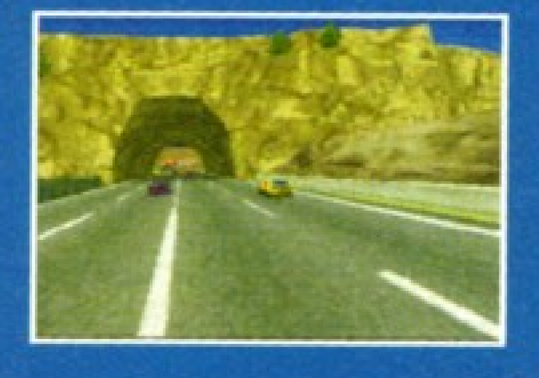
A sheer drop to the left (thankfully walled off) shows a balloon slowly rising (it gets higher every lap). Negotiate the tight turn and you have the first sheer 90 degree turn in the lap! Take it from the outside and power-slide around and you should be okay.





SECTOR 3: TUNNELS OVER TUNNELS

A couple of nasty corners await after passing through a tunnel (over which you drive a bit later). These turns are surrounded by dirt which slow you down tremendously. After speeding over the tunnel you just passed under, there's just one more tunnel to go through (the train uses this one) before turning right and heading for home. Or rather, the next lap. Or the finish line.



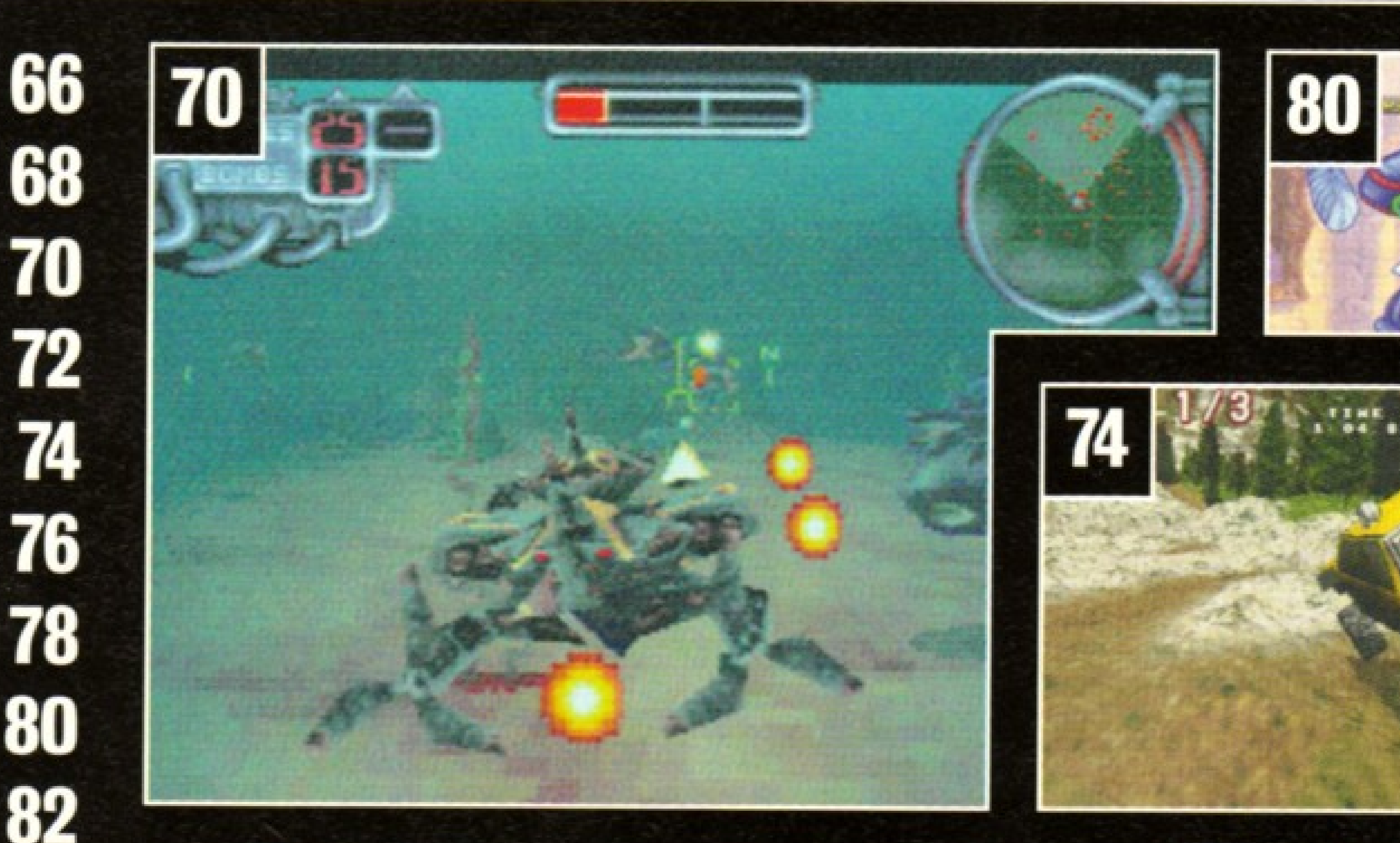




SEGA SATURN™

Review *Index*

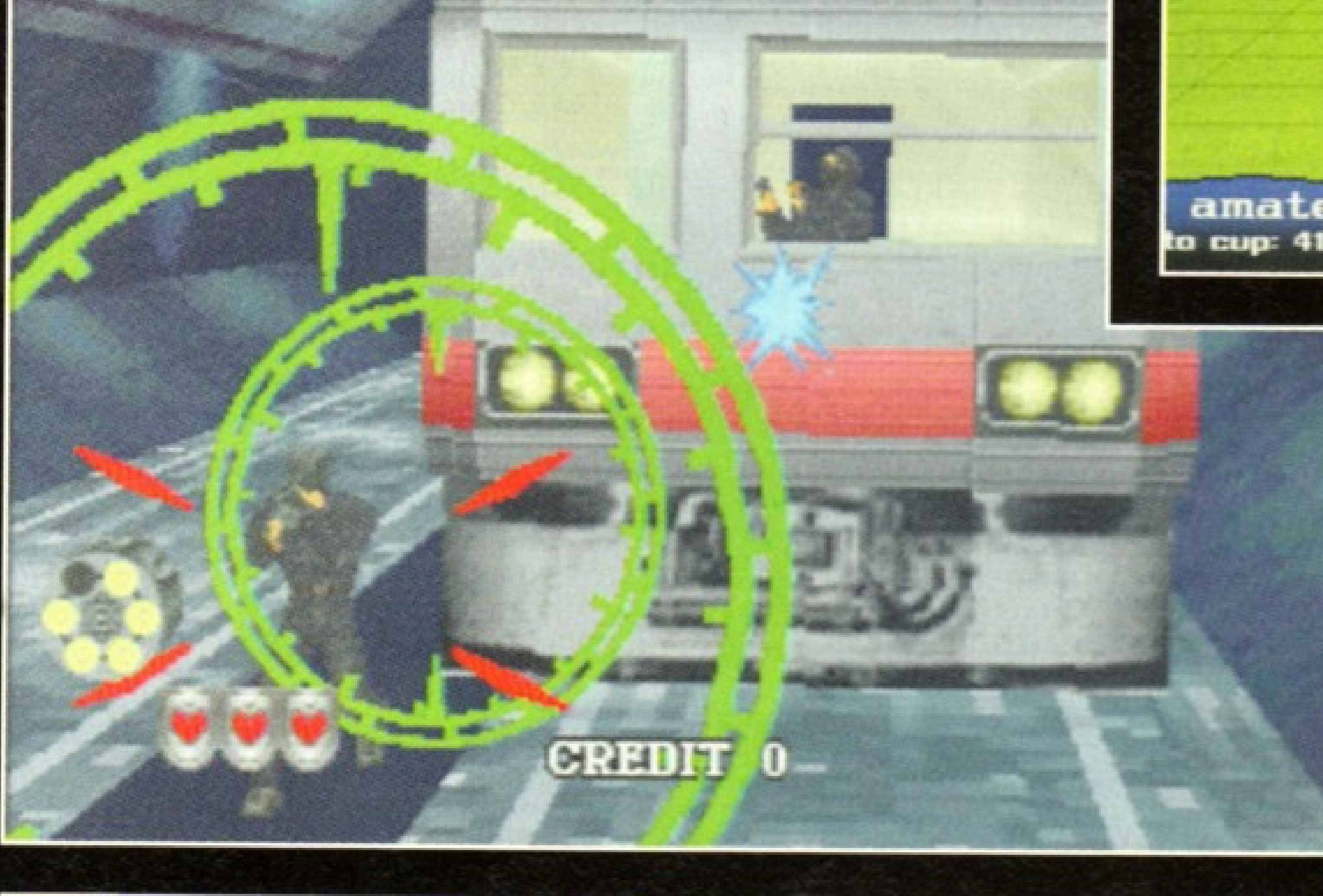
When the Review Index announced last month that it was leaving SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE to become a crooner in Las Vegas, we were naturally quite surprised. Since Issue #1, Rev as we fondly call it, has done valiant service in pointing out what reviews are where. But times change, and as the sound of 'Come Fly With Me' and 'April in Paris' echoed about the office, we sensed fresh ambitions emanating from the previously humble page. So this, I'm afraid, is the last you'll see of it. Unless of course you want to catch it at the Holiday Inn topping the bill with Tom Jones.
Au Revior Revvy boy!



80

74













VIRTUA COP 2

AM2 have established themselves as the most greatest of Sega Saturn coders with an established quality of videogame second to none! However, as the coin-ops increase in sophistication, can the Saturn keep up? In a word: YES!

BY	SEGA/AM2
PRICE	TBA
STYLE	KILLING
RELEASE	NOVEMBER

RECOMMENDED BY SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE 95%

The sheer numbers against you in Virtua Cop 2 is far more pronounced than in the first game - especially on later stages.

The backgrounds in Virtua Cop 2 put the originals to shame in terms of detail - but the speed remains the same.

Gamesplayers can be divided into two camps - there are those who see Virtua Cop as a nice-looking but extremely shallow videogame with no lastability. And then there are those who have actually played it. And played it and played it and played it. You see, Cop is one of the best games you can get for the Saturn and presents a huge challenge thanks to some exceptional lastability-inducing game variations. Right up until now, the original Cop was still being played in the EMAP offices.

Now the same rush of wonderment and enjoyment is sweeping through the office again. You see, Virtua Cop 2 has just turned up and it's even better than the first game. In fact, it's a whole lot better.

The most important thing to say about Virtua Cop 2 must be the sheer scale of the game. Just about half-way through every level you're given a choice - you can select one of two routes through the latter half of the stage. So basically, every stage is at least one-and-a-half times as large as Cop 1's. And you can't see everything the game has to offer by just using one credit. There's also a lot more variety in these stages -

You can select one of two routes through the latter half of each stage - Basically, every stage is one and a half times bigger than Cop 1

This here's Rage from Virtua Cop. And indeed Virtua Cop 2. He's joined with his partner Smarty from the first game as well as Janet Marshall. She drives the car in the chase sequences.

A close-range assailant is easily taken out.





The Justice Shot from VC1 is back - shoot the gun from your foes' hands!



The stage select screen - much like Virtua Cop in that you can select the levels in whatever order you want.

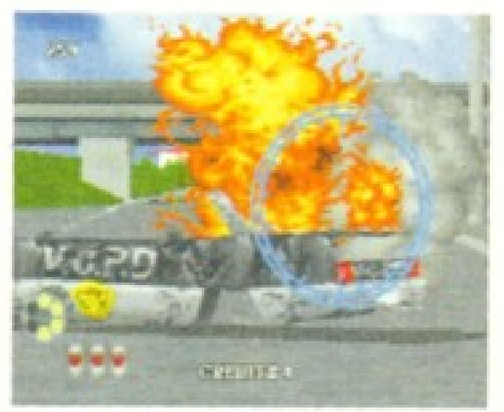


You're looking down on the action from a balcony on this shot (above). All the monitors can be blasted off the desks as the enemies pop up from below them.





Run down those hostages!



The first car chase culminates in some ace explosions.



HERE'S THE DEAL

So you've got Virtua Cop 1 in your collection but you haven't really played too much of the sequel. What are the main improvements then?

Well, don't expect too much in the way of improvements to the finely honed gameplay. The same blasting action is pretty much in evidence. There's just so much more to experience this time. In terms of things to see, there's a lot more (thanks to the choice of route through the level) as well as more variety in the bad guys (the range of opponents was a bit limited in Cop 1).

The audio-visual overload reaches new levels on the ace car chase sequences. The graphics are brilliant - taking out a villain's car by shooting his tyres and watching him crash is a spectacular experience.







There's two homages to Sarah from VF in Cop 2 (above right).



There's plenty more variation in the guys attacking you.

the environs are far more impressive with a lot more going on than in the first game. The addition of brilliant car chases and some awesome set-piece action scenes doesn't hurt either!

It must have been a real effort to convert Virtua Cop 2. The arcade original is far, far more detailed than its predecessor (which the Saturn emulated almost perfectly) and twice as smooth. The AM2 conversion-smiths have kept the frame rate at the same level as the original Virtua Cop, but the amount of detail lavished on the backgrounds is far, far more pronounced. It's lacking some of the coin-op's detail, but in Saturn terms, it's a visual feast far in advance of what was achieved with the original Virtua Cop.

These new backgrounds, as well as being prettier are also far more interactive. Destruction fiends should be happy with the advances AM2 have made by making just about everything you'd want shootable. Signs collapse, watermelons explode, monitors can be blasted. And as for the carnage in the bar (complete with loads of bottles to blase)... it's incredible!

In fact, just about the only thing I wasn't quite so impressed with was the music, which although well above average isn't up to the classic tunes created for the original Cop. Still, this has been made for (just about) with an excellent range of new sound effects adding to the impact of the experience still further. The phrase "AM2 have performed miracles" is perhaps getting a bit worn out by now, but the simple fact is that they have. You couldn't really hope for a more impressive conversion of Virtua Cop 2. All of the things that made the first Cop so lastable - the additional modes and what-have-you - are back, and even then they're better than they were before. The range of secrets to uncover is very, very cool as well. All this plus a new sub-level as well! In the arcade version, there was no choice of route through the final stage. Well, there is now - and it's a Saturn exclusive! My advice is simple: sample yet more AM2 genius and get your ass down to the software shop and buy this amazing game right now.

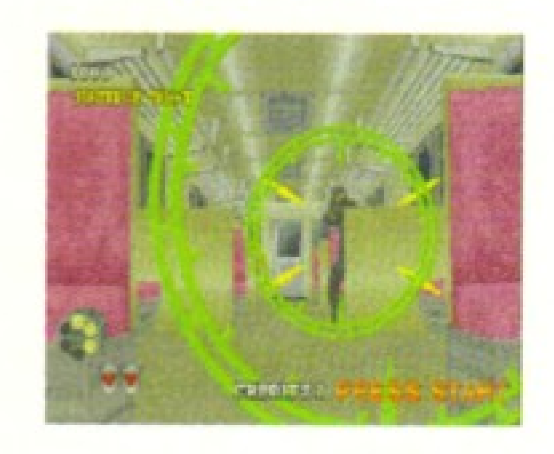
RICH





The enemies attack from all directions!





The train level from File 3 is a graphical marvel - and it's rock hard as well!

The amount of detail is far more pronounced... In Saturn terms, it's a visual feast far in advance of Cop 1

Another classic AM2 release, defying the so-called "limitations" of the Saturn. Virtua Cop 2 is absolutely stunning and simply MUST be bought. Now.

graphics	95
sound	90
playability	95
lastability	94
overall	95%



DAYTONA CHAMPIONSHIP CI

Daytona USA? Great gameplay, shame about the graphics. And the sound. But lo! Here comes the Rally conversion team intent on releasing a better conversion! Have they succeeded? Well, yes. And no.

BY	SEGA/ CS TEAM
PRICE	£49.99
STYLE	DRIVING
RELEASE	NOVEMBER

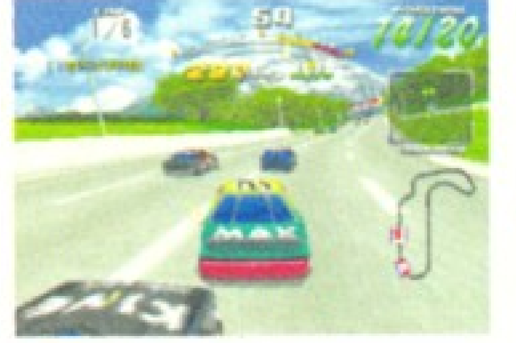
RECOMMENDED BY SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE 90%



The pit crew haven't really changed much since their debut outing in the original Daytona...



The one difficult corner on the National Park Speedway proves to be the undoing of this particular driver...





Jostling for position on the opening straight of one of the new courses – National Park Speedway.

Everyone can see that the original Daytona USA was a bit of a missed opportunity. Yes, the all-important gameplay was brilliant, but the graphics (most notably the polygon pop-up, or "clipping") was abysmal. Enter the CS Team behind the brilliant Sega Rally conversion - surely they could reintroduce the awesome graphics and retain the gameplay? The answer is yes to the former, no to the latter.

The graphics are much, much improved over the original. The letterbox display has all but disappeared and the smoothness of the game is much superior. In fact, I would venture to say that along with Virtua Fighter 2, this is the best PAL translation I have ever seen, virtually indistinguishable from the NTSC original in terms of look and speed.

Also worthy of praise is the attention taken in re-rendering the original courses. On everything except one section of the expert track, the backgrounds boast greater resolution and better colour. The textures, although still not a patch on the hi-res glory of the arcade, look much, much better. Also, the clipping is much improved. Not in Sega Rally's league, mind you, but a huge improvement.

The thing is, the CS Team have completely done away with the cars that were in the original Daytona. So, essentially, Arcade Mode is missing the most important aspect of the arcade game. Although there are "Gallop" and "Hornet" cars to choose, they look and control completely differently to the vehicles from the coin-op. The main problem with this conversion is that the handling just isn't at all like the original coin-op, or the first Saturn translation. The power-sliding system is totally different. And not as good, unless you have the NiGHTS analogue controller.

And what of the new enhancements? Well, the new cars and the new control system takes some getting used to and whilst not in Daytona's league of genius, it's still damn good. Like the cars, the new tracks just aren't Daytona. Think Sega Rally with tarmac and more imagination and you have some idea of what's on offer. They're excellent fun, if a little featureless compared to the timeless originals.

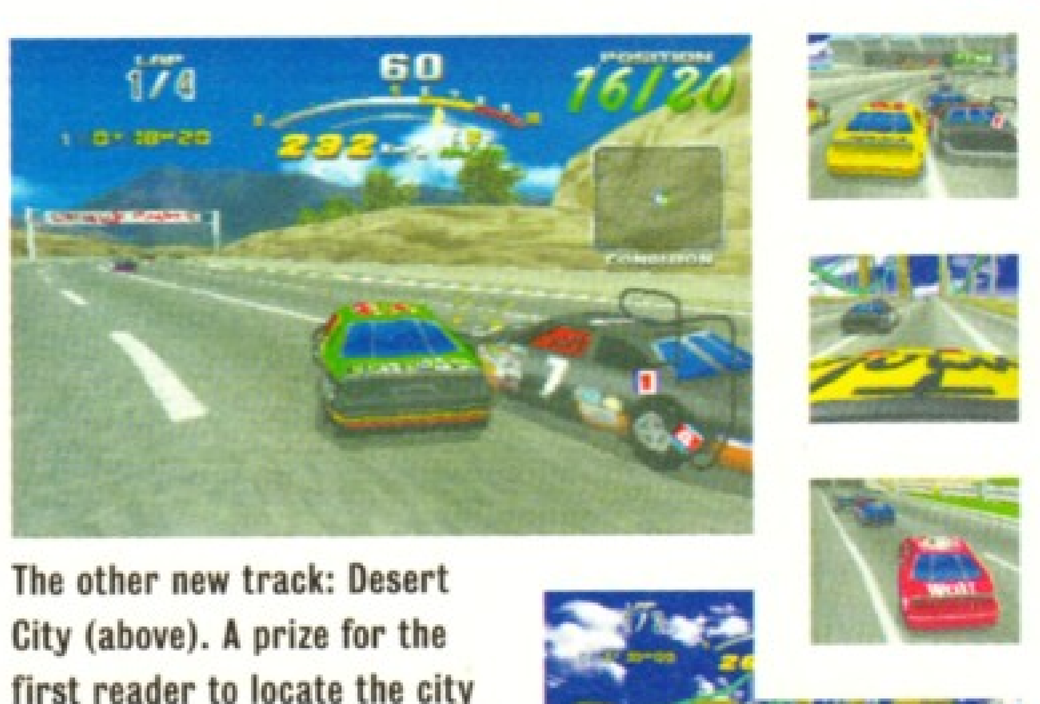
The two-player mode is a welcome addition, but

POP-UP PALPITATIONS

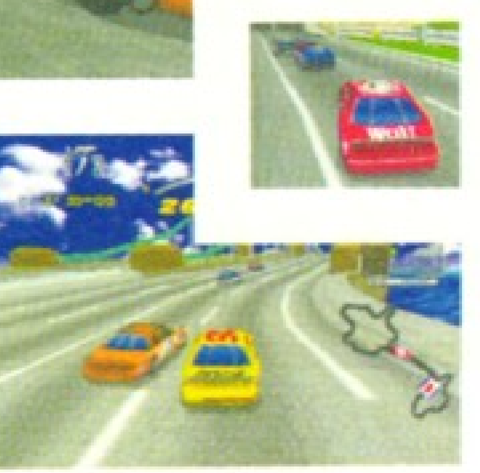
To the average spectator, the original Daytona USA looked like a right dog's dinner. The graphics, although fairly faithful to the original coin-op, were marred by its polygon pop-up. Scenery would just suddenly appear out of nowhere on-screen, severely testing your willing suspension of disbelief. Well, solving that particular problem was the biggest problem facing the CS conversion team. The extra detail on the tracks means that the pop-up isn't as good as Sega Rally's (and still very noticeable at times), but it's still a huge improvement.



By taking away the original cars with their particular handling, this new conversion doesn't play much like Daytona any more



The other new track: Desert City (above). A prize for the first reader to locate the city in this course.





RCUIT EDITION

Dinosaur Canyon looks a lot better (apart from the fossil).

Moving background objects on the new tracks. Woo!

Manx TT meets Japan's Suzuka F1 track here.

Desert City, the toughest track? Dinosaur Canyon, surprisingly.

Everything from the original Daytona USA has been redrawn.

only seems to work well on the new tracks. The originals are severely blighted to by some horrendous clipping, which takes a lot of the fun away. This game is in desperate need of link-up cable compatibility - now that would be spectacular.

The only thing I haven't really covered is the sound. The good news is that the karaoke-style singing from the original is gone. Personally, I was hoping for the arcade tunes but instead we have something of a mish-mash with every Sega territory contributing a track or two. Sega Europe's Richard Jacques shines through with some excellent dancey renditions of the originals, but only a couple of his tracks have been included. This paves the way for Sega of Japan's usual Sega Rally style muzak (pretty good, as it goes) and Sega of America's absolutely horrendous "soft rock" (replete with Mr Big vocalist, Eric Martin's husky crooning). The overall impression is could have been better - some of the tracks are great. Others (the SoA ones) are rubbish.



Surely the point of this whole exercise was in giving the Saturn the version of Daytona it deserved? By taking out the original cars with their particular handling, this doesn't play like Daytona any more. That's not to say that the game is awful, it's just not really what I was looking for in this conversion. And that's the bottom line really, if you buy this expecting a new racing game with some of Daytona's tracks, you will be well satisfied. And there are some pretty decent hidden features in the game which should please AM2 traditionalists a bit. And that's really where this game does score. Take away the Daytona baggage and essentially you have a different racing game that is very enjoyable to play, looks absolutely fantastic, has five ace tracks, two-player capabilities and loads of lastability. Looking at it from that perspective, Daytona CCE suddenly becomes a lot more appealing. It's just a shame that the genius gameplay that made Saturn Daytona USA so great (despite its graphical frailties) isn't here in any way, shape or form.

RICH



Two-player mode is a clipping nightmare, although the two new tracks work pretty well.

The version of Daytona the Saturn deserves? Not at all. Get over that disappointment and enjoy what the CS Team have produced - a graphically excellent, fine-playing racing game that's far superior to the average driving game.

graphics	94
sound	83
playability	88
lastability	91

overall **90%**

AMOK



Featuring some stunning landscapes and incredible special effects, you can't argue with the stylish visuals Amok presents. The question is, after years in development, does this Scavenger release cut the mustard in the gameplay department?

BY	SCAVENGER/LEMON
PRICE	TBA
STYLE	SHOOTING
RELEASE	DECEMBER

RECOMMENDED BY SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE 90%





Previous games that have used Voxel technology to create 3D landscapes have suffered from producing very samey looking environments. Not so Amok. You get underwater stages, a cityscape and some wastelands action too. So, plenty of variety in the graphics as well as the missions on offer.

CONTROL-A-THON

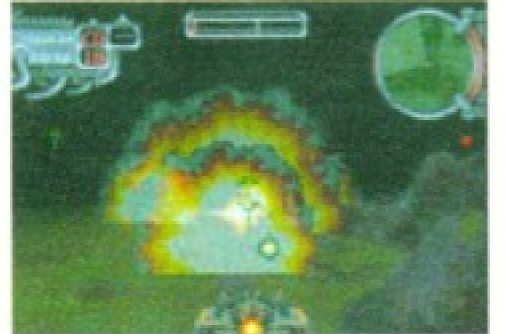
Amok benefits from having a pretty excellent control system. In fact, just about the only thing missing is compatibility with the NiGHTS analogue controller. Still, what coders Lemon have done is produce a system of control similar to Doom and Quake. Left and right rotate the Amok craft with up and down producing forward and backward motions. You can sidestep left and right with the shoulder buttons (very good on the NiGHTS pad) - excellent for dodging enemy fire, particularly when used in conjunction with the run button. A great tactic is to utilise the strafe and turn buttons simultaneous, to circle your opponent, hitting home whilst avoiding enemy fire.



Scavenger have a reputation of making games that look, or feel, completely unlike anything seen before. Case in point: Megadrive Red Zone - a game which was supremely underrated when it came out. The same could be said of this new game from the same stable of coders.

Amok is a distinctive-looking 3D blasting game that looks totally unlike anything you've ever seen. Rather than rely on texture-mapped polygons to create the landscape, developers Lemon have sought a different route. Using the Saturn's VDP1 video processing chip, they've created a very realistic (albeit slightly blocky) landscaping routine rather like a low resolution version of those fractal landscapes that were all the rage years ago. The effect is rather splendid. The move away from polygons means that there's absolutely no clipping in any tangible form and also smoothness isn't an issue. This game runs as fast and indeed as smooth as Virtua Cop or Sega Rally. Extra details to the landscape are added in the form of scalable sprites (that is, they get bigger as you get closer to them) - something that the Saturn doesn't exactly have any difficulty in producing. Adding to the classiness of the overall look are some stunning special effects, most notably the lens flare from the sun as you turn. The explosions too are rather special. Very large and very rewarding

The move away from polygons means that there's no clipping in any tangible form and smoothness isn't an issue







The cityscape level is packed with enemies. Things get pretty tough from here on in.



One of the last levels takes you back underwater. Various missions include pursuing (and indeed destroying) an enemy ship.





The first level of Amok is set underwater, but it's a cakewalk compared to the terrors that await on the later sea-level.

TWO-PLAYER CAPABILITIES

Amok is pretty well sorted in the multiplayer department, with what must be one of the best split-screen modes to date. No ugly clipping and the minimum of slowdown make this something of a visual feast. Hats off to the Scavenger boys here as not only is this part of the game visually sound, the gameplay variations are cool too! Reminiscent of Doom - and that's no bad thing.

1. COOPERATIVE

The default two-player system, this is very similar indeed to the basic one-player game. In fact, you undertake the self-same missions simultaneously with a pal. It's very similar to playing in Cooperative Mode in Doom or Quake. This adds a whole new dimension to the gameplay and the split-screen mode works very well indeed.

2. ONE-ON-ONE

This is probably the closest you'll get to the Doom DeathMatch style of game. Your job is simply to blast the crap out of your opponent. Adding to your problems is the fact that the enemy are still about, so it's a good idea to try to catch your opponent in a crossfire. Search around and stock up on weapons first!









Large explosions are one of the best things about Amok.



Throwing a bomb into a minefield produces some bloody enormous conflagrations. As seen in these pictures.



Amok uses a Voxel-based landscape in order to produce some stunning (if a tad blocky) landscapes.



Boom. You're dead.

Even small enemies blow up nicely.









Some split-screen stuff.

after a pitched battle.

Amok features a pretty decent control system too. It's rather like Doom in that your frog-like machine can walk, run and strafe left and right. Everything is logically placed on the control pad, and the old Doom tactics of using rotate left and strafe to circle around targets, which is also great for dodging enemy targets.

The meat and drink of the game is quite similar in execution to the Strike games. Every mission is split into a series of smaller sub-tasks, completion of which allows you to move on to the next part. What is good though is that if you fail some of the sub-tasks, it radically alters what happens next. The mission can be salvaged if you make a cock-up, which puts it one up on the Strike games.

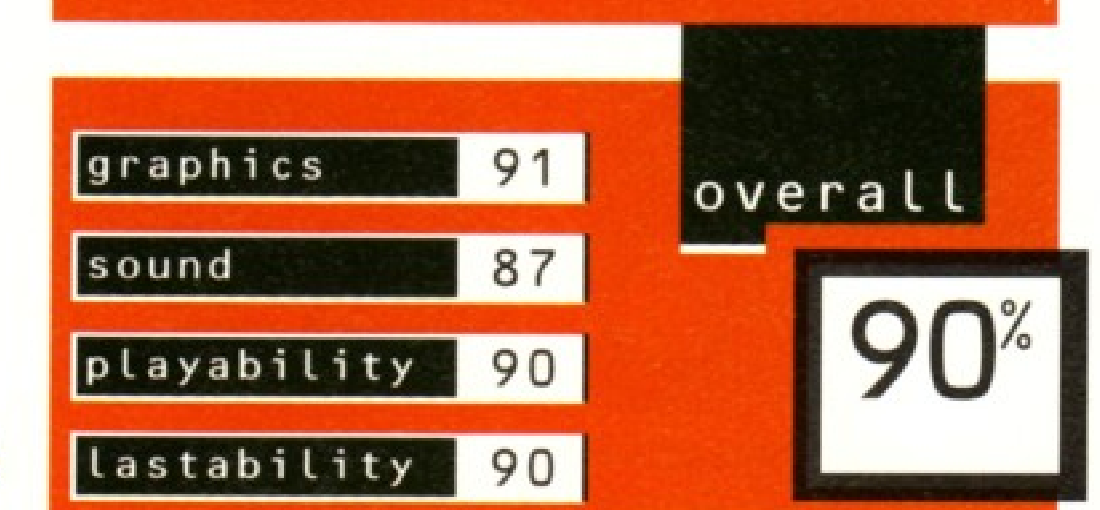
Even I was initially put off a bit by the difficulty level. Make no bones about it, Amok is something of a testing game. Absolute mastery of your craft is a necessity and it does take a couple of hours to fully explore its potential. Thankfully, the involving game design and varied tasks, coupled with the sheer enjoyment of the game more than makes up for its initial difficulty. The look of the game suggests that this is something different, and to be honest, it may not appeal to everyone. At first.

Give it some time though and you can't help but get drawn into this deep, compelling blasting game.




RICH

Very original, very classy visuals, plus a strong element of blasting skill and strategy, Amok's gameplay manages to match the excellent look. Highly recommended.



graphics	91
sound	87
playability	90
lastability	90

overall 90%



STREET RACER

No matter what console you happen to own most people would agree that one of the greatest games ever is Mario Kart on the Super NES. Would it be sacrilege to compare Street Racer to it?...

BY	UBI SOFT
PRICE	£44.99
STYLE	RACING
RELEASE	NOVEMBER




Just what the relevance of the scrapbook picture background is I couldn't tell you. Still, it looks nice.





(Above) Surf goes flying over at the crossroads in her Beetle.






This pink bunny turns up in the intro sequence. Cue a rather naff comic sequence where it keeps getting run down. Chortle.



This picture reminds me of Chris Rea...

...On The Beach. A brilliant song n'est pas?

Street Racer seems to have appeared out of nowhere. It has in fact been in development for some time, and if you've seen any screenshots of it at all, you'll no doubt be thinking one thing – Mario Kart. There's little question that UBI Soft used Mario Kart as an influence, something that's evident enough in not only the basic premise but also the themes of the various tracks. But whether it's a bit of a rip off or not, who really cares so long as it plays well?

Street Racer features a total of eight cars in all, each of which is judged on its speed, acceleration, grip and handling. The best to start with is Hodja because all of the elements balance well. Once you feel comfortable with the courses and handling you might want to move on to a car with better acceleration and speed In addition to this, each car has its own range of special abilities. Frank's car for instance makes a ghostly transformation which scares other cars out of the way. Or there's Raphael's gold chain grapple that pulls other cars backwards. Each character has a total of two specials to go with their ability



The eight player split-screen mode is pretty phenomenal...





The rather dim and sinister track is the home to Frank Instien – one of the racers.

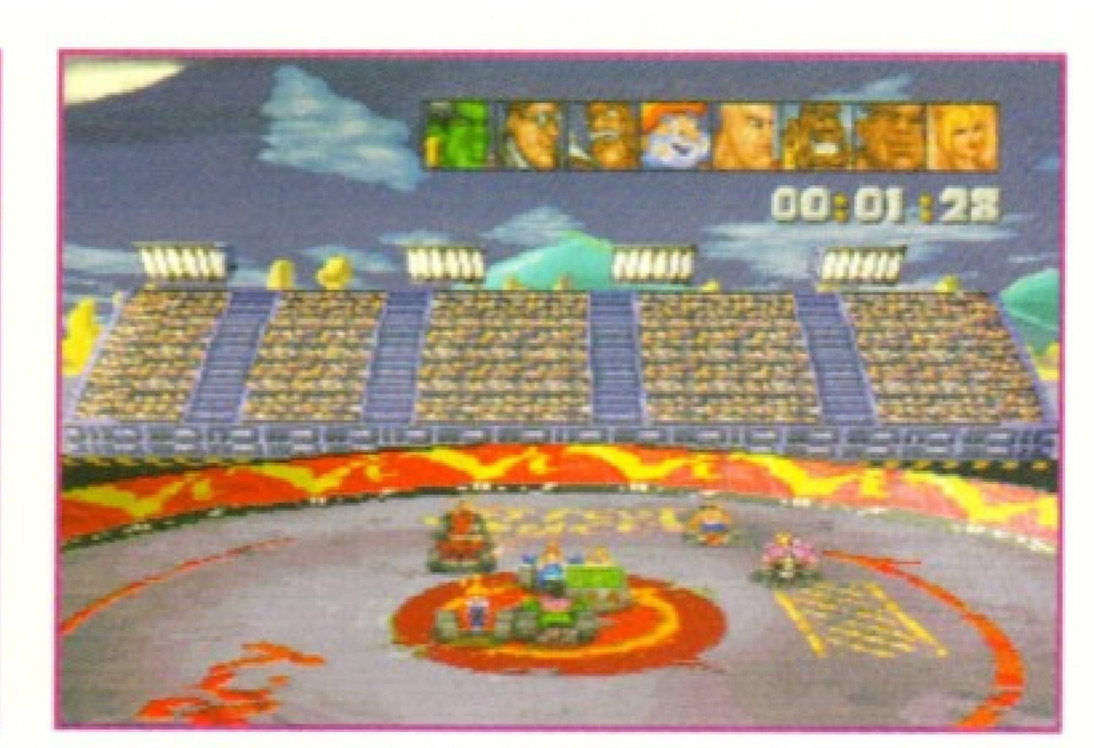




LET'S GET READY TO...

Rumble in Rumble mode! This is where all of the characters engage in a free for all in a circular arena. The idea is simply to knock other drivers out of the ring by whatever means possible, whether that means punching or using one of your characters special abilities. On the easy level there are walls around the ring which gradually disappear, but play in Crazy mode and the rumble starts without any walls at all.





...whether it's a bit of a rip off or not, who really cares so long as it plays well.

to punch left or right of them.

The courses vary according to which championship you're racing in. The three cups – bronze, silver and gold – involve racing around eight tracks, each of which is the home to a certain character and when they are racing on it they hold a slight advantage. To progress to the Silver cup you must first win the Bronze cup and likewise going from Silver cup to Gold cup. As you move through the cups the courses get progressively more challenging and your fellow racers more proficient.

Although I found the characters a bit tacky and the courses largely derivative, it remains a fact that Street Racer has got a lot going for it. The CPU players are well programmed meaning they respond to your abilities, thus ensuring a more challenging race and the variety of game modes further enhances the game's longevity.

My only real criticism is to do with the animation. While it all moves very smoothly (60 frames a second - twice as smooth as Sega Rally), racing tends to give you the impression that the road is moving while the car remains stationary. Admittedly this doesn't really effect the gameplay a great deal but it does feels a bit disorientating at times. As for the graphics, they're very nice indeed, colourful and rich in detail.

The eight-player split screen mode is pretty phenomenal although it has to be said that the image is so small that it becomes a bit ridiculous. Four player split screen is actually very good though, and there isn't the least sign of slowdown.

So is it the new Mario Kart? Not quite. It lacks the overall accessibility of the Super NES classic and the course design isn't quite as innovative. Even so, it's a good multi-player game and has got enough going for it to stand out as a success in its own right.

ROB



It's the token fat guy!

It's the token babe!

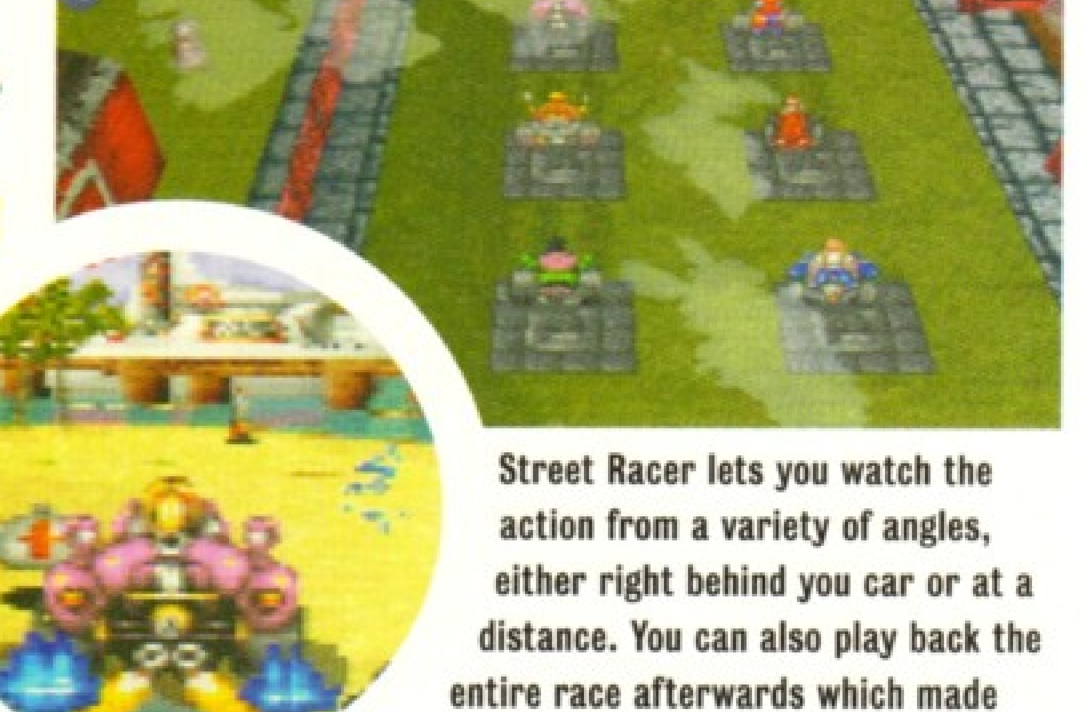




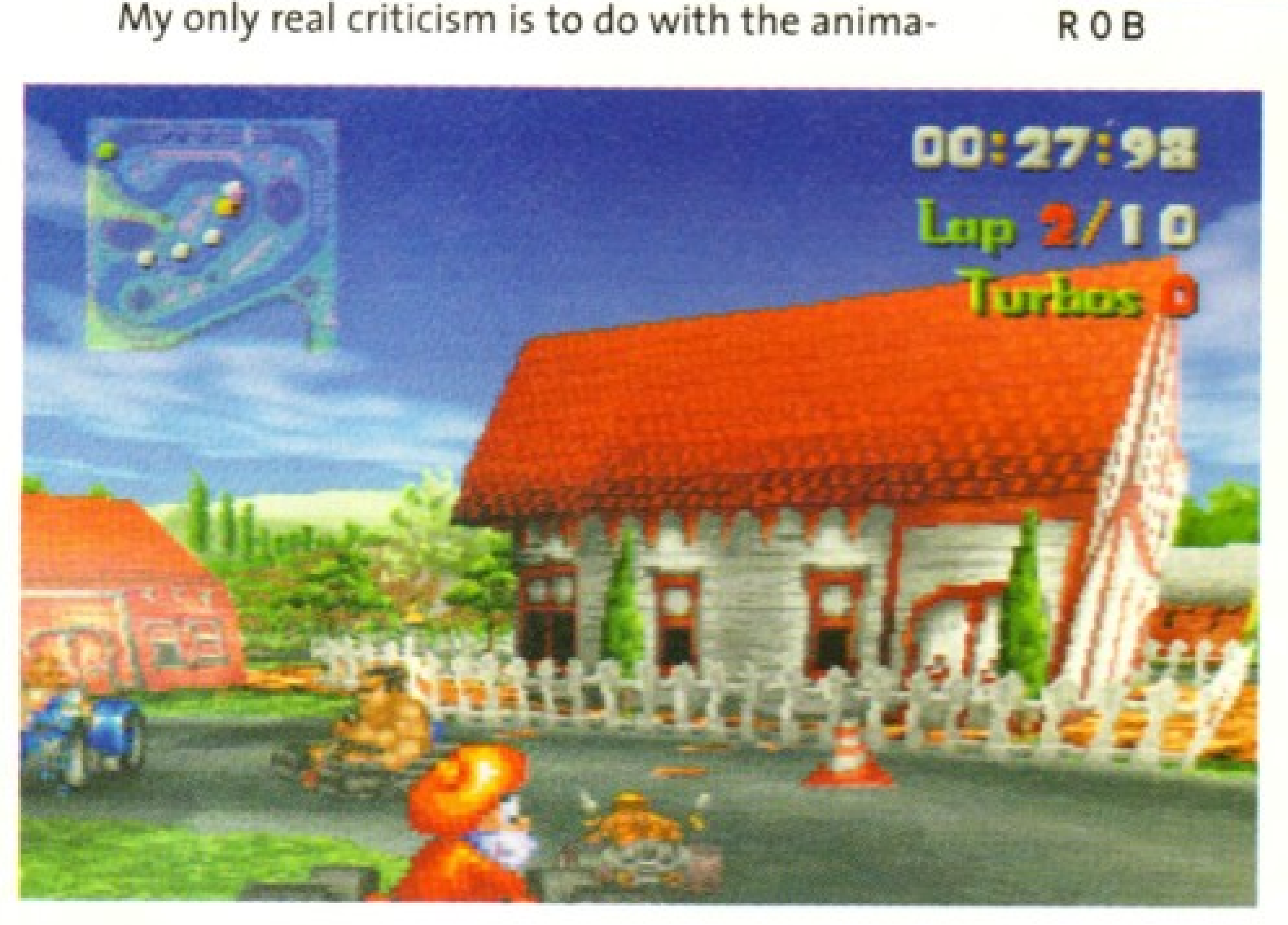
It's the token, err, Turk guy.



It's a token repetitive joke!



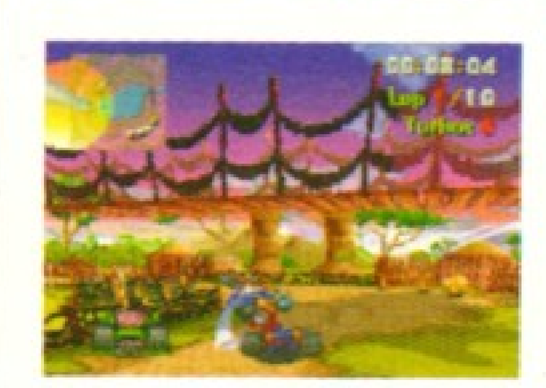
Street Racer lets you watch the action from a variety of angles, either right behind you car or at a distance. You can also play back the entire race afterwards which made taking the shots easier let me tell you.





Ohh, and the colours! There were so many colours! Like a dream!





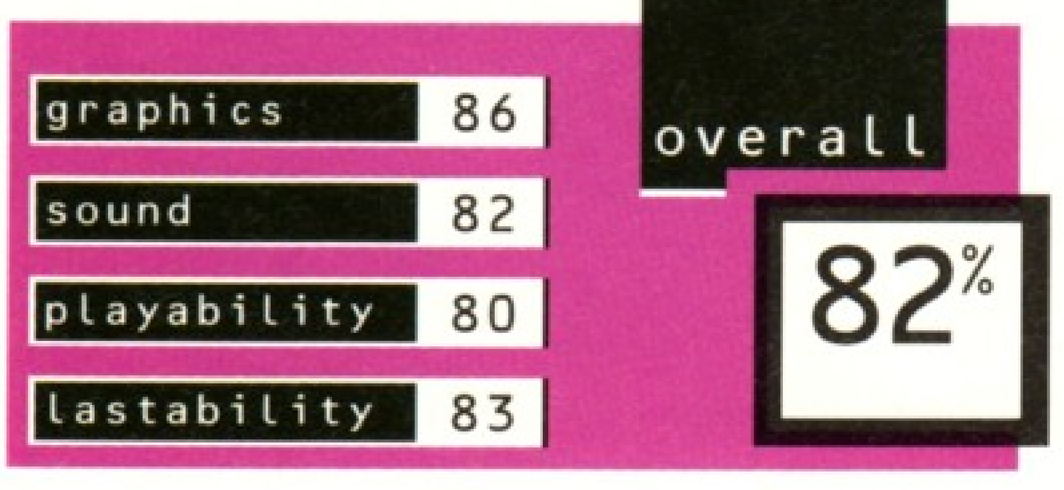
(Above) This is the level belonging to Suzulu, the bloke from Africa.





This quaint little village track looks like something out of Postman Pat. But unfortunately no Pat.

Not quite the classic that Mario Kart was but Street Racer remains very playable and challenging and is especially fun in multi-player mode.



graphics	86
sound	82
playability	80
lastability	83
overall	82%



HARDCORE 4x4

Sprechen sie Hardencoren? Ja! Head off the road and onto the rough dirt tracks of the apocalypse with Gremlin's new racer. Don't forget your neck brace. Or your crossword.

BY	GREMLIN
PRICE	£TBA
STYLE	RACING
RELEASE	NOVEMBER

ONE CAREFUL LADY OWNER

Just like any reputable motor dealership, hardcore 4x4 offers you – yes, YOU – a choice of drives. Unlike most dealerships though, this one tells you the steering, power, suspension, handling and speed capabilities of the chassis on offer. This would be handy in real life, but it's extra-useful when you're about to face computer generated off-road simulations. Beginners should head straight for handling-heavy vehicles. Experts, on the other hand, can go for max speed and rely on their abilities to compensate for the lack of traction.





I'd better be really careful here, because Steve from Gremlin is in the office today. In fact, he's on our floor.



I don't want him coming over here while I'm captioning this page and seeing the mark for his game. Sorry, Steve.

The Saturn is pretty well stocked for racing games already, it has to be said. But market analysts employed by Gremlin spotted one enormously ignored niche in the commerceplace. Off-road racing. Perhaps it's the amazing unpopularity of big trucks in this country which is responsible for the dearth of off-road racing games. Or perhaps not. Whatever the reason may be, Gremlin have seen the gap and are relentlessly pursuing it with Hardcore 4x4, the Saturn's first off-road four-wheel drive racing simulation.

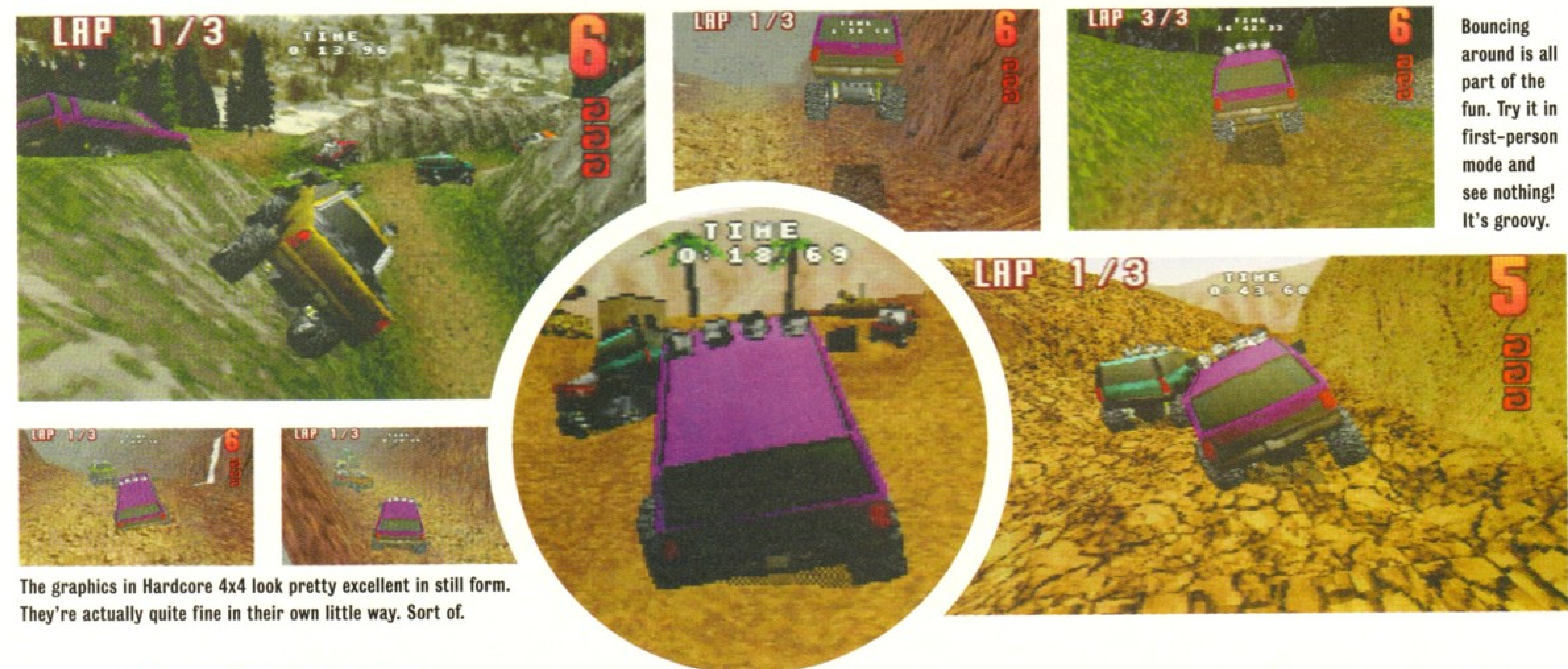
In case you're not familiar with the sport – which you're not expected to be over here – it's dead simple. Six contenders (in this case) storm their giant jeeps up and down big hills, which are dotted with smaller hills and valleys known as "bumps" and "dips". The object of the race is to come first after three laps by not rolling your motor over a hundred times and cracking your head. Of course, this being a game, it's impossible to really crack your head, but turning onto your lid does cost precious seconds.

So, basically, it's like every other kind of race apart from a slow bicycle race. Where hardcore really differs from the competition is the way in which you're expected to negotiate the courses. Instead of just having to take corners and go really fast, in Hardcore you have to read the track, take the lines of least resistance, avoid too-steep slopes, not fall over and not bounce around too much. This is actually a refreshing idea, so well done Gremlin.

But if one idea made a great game I'd be a millionaire designer like Dave Perry by now. And I'm not, so it isn't. The problem with 4x4 racing is that it's intrinsically slow. Which makes you wonder what kind of a race game it makes. And the answer is a slow-moving one, which is a novelty at least.

What's surprising, given the unusually slow pace of the action, is the equally slow frame rate. Whilst

That's off-road racing, man. The crazy psycho world of the big truck driver with no name, dude...



Bouncing around is all part of the fun. Try it in first-person mode and see nothing! It's groovy.

The graphics in Hardcore 4x4 look pretty excellent in still form. They're actually quite fine in their own little way. Sort of.





(ABOVE) That's the first-person view with a yellow cab in front.



You're the purple truck. In a ditch. Stuck. Getting overtaken.

the trucks and tracks are very nice looking, well textured and admirably colourful, the clipping is pretty cack. Sometimes it's obscured by the twists of the course, but often it's obvious, especially given the varying height of the horizon as you climb and dip. The movement is slightly jerky as result, too. Not that this is so noticeable, as the game constantly throws your vehicle around in a hundred directions anyway. What it does show is the insubstantial nature of the trucks. They're lent a slightly floaty feel which is enhanced by the lack of inertia on collisions. Basically you can spang your motor into any of the other cars with little effect to your direction. Except you might pass through the front end of one of them.

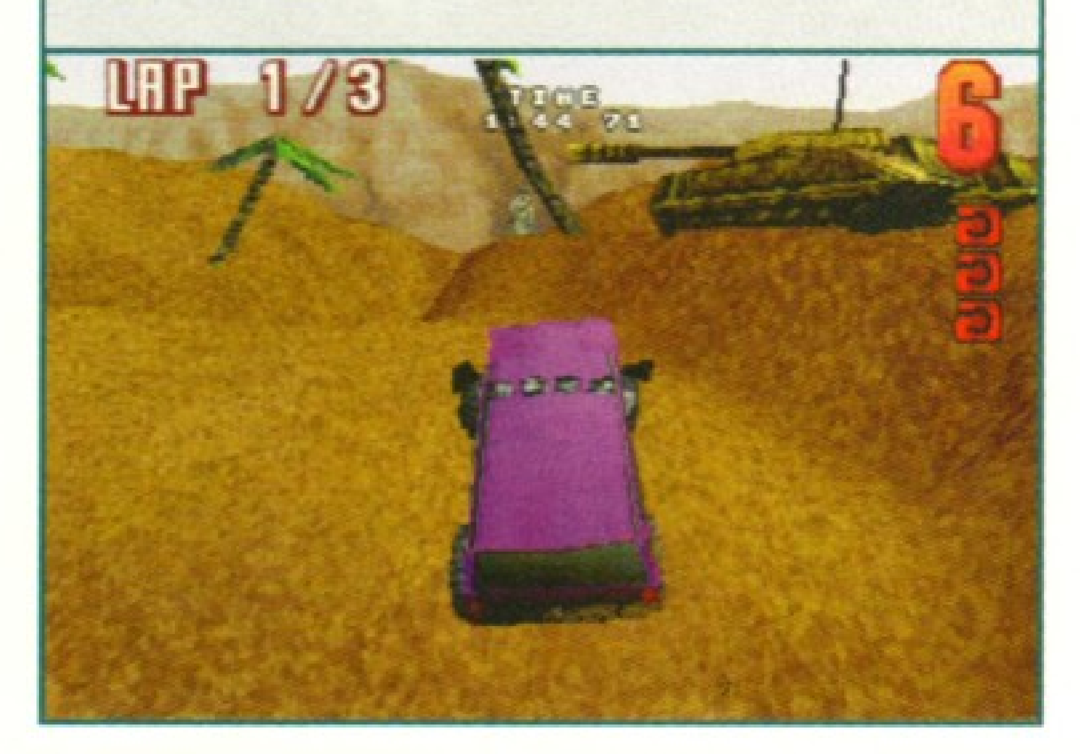
It's not all trauma, though. The biggest obstacle to 4x4 is getting to know the controls. You can't just attack even the straights in the same way you normally would with a racer. The skill is observing each small nuance and pitfall of the course, knowing when you're going to bounce too high to avert your steering and preventing yourself from rolling. Don't worry too much about that last one though, as it seems 4x4 trucks can drive almost horizontally on their sides without falling over. Yeah right. As if they've ever seen a Mitsubishi Shogun in a high wind. The suspension that takes the biggest hammering is your suspension of disbelief.

The trouble is that once the novelty value (which is very high) has worn off, there isn't a lot of substance to Hardcore 4x4. Sure, there are loads of tracks and difficulty settings, but once you've got the trick of it there just isn't the same scope for shaving milliseconds of your times. The random bumpy nature of the floor means there's no such thing as a perfect circuit. Obviously there are going to be some off-road enthusiasts out there thinking "So what? That's off roading, man, the crazy psycho world of the big truck rider with no name. Dude". And those people will doubtless find Hardcore 4x4 fully entertaining. For the most part, though, Rally is the yardstick by which these things are judged, and unless you're desperate for a change Hardcore just may not be enough to sustain your interest. Still, I'd like to see a sequel with more addictive courses – it'd probably be corking.

RAD

BOMBTRACK

Hardcore 4x4 certainly scores points for the originality of its courses. The opening rocky chasm isn't particularly anything out of the ordinary, perhaps. But after winning that you move on to a track which starts on tarmac, takes a detour into the woods and back out onto the road for the next lap. Best of all though is the Warzone course, set in the middle of a Middle Eastern conflict! Tanks and pillboxes abound, which makes you wonder who would hold a race there really. Actually, the best course (for the same reason) is the one set around the rim of an active volcano. That's loads better.













(BOTTOM LEFT) Volcanic action around the fiery volcano.



I used to like that truck Lee Majors had in The Fall Guy. It had an eagle on the bonnet, and a rack of guns in the back. He was a bounty hunter.

A great idea which has made a flawed game. Just doesn't have the fiendish course layouts which make this sort of thing last.

graphics	90
sound	72
playability	80
lastability	69
overall	76

CHAOS CONTROL

They're a bit like buses really aren't they? To begin with the only game to use the Virtua gun was Virtua Cop. And after an eon of waiting, Mighty Hits, Virtua Cop 2 and Chaos all turn up at once.

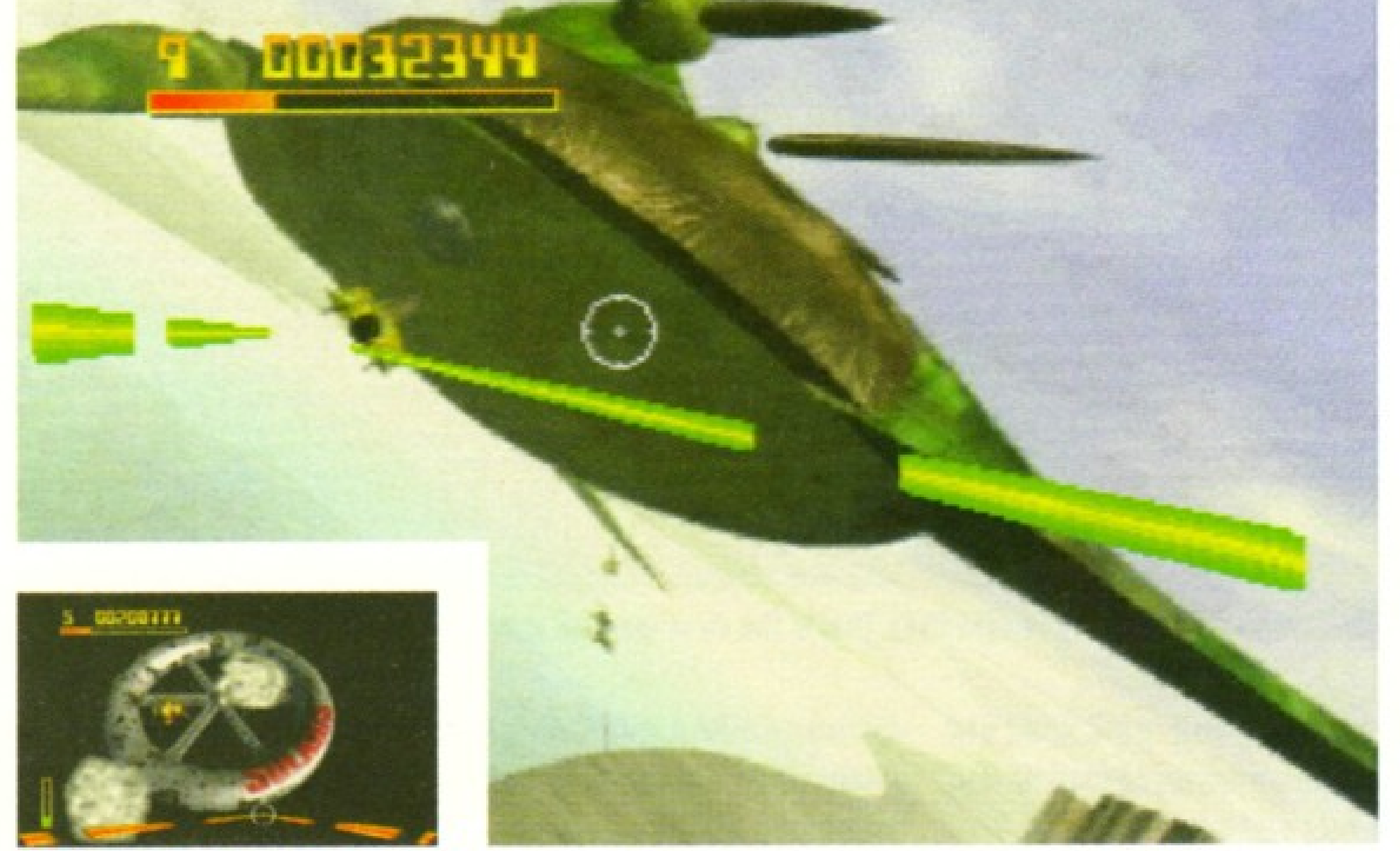
BY	INFOGRAMES
PRICE	£39.99
STYLE	SHOOTING
RELEASE	OUT NOW

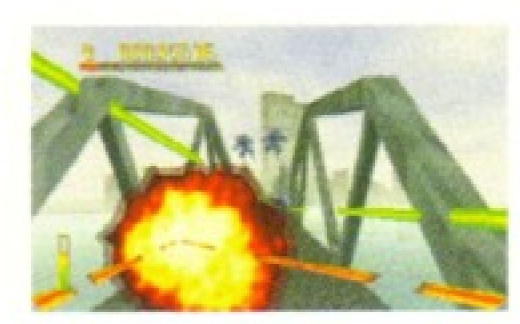






The symbol of free America is under attack! What's gonna happen to all those great things like Oprah now eh? Or even Ricky Lake! Save us!







(Left) This here is an alien vessel. It's green and it looks like a huge vegetable. (Above) Just another typical day in New York.

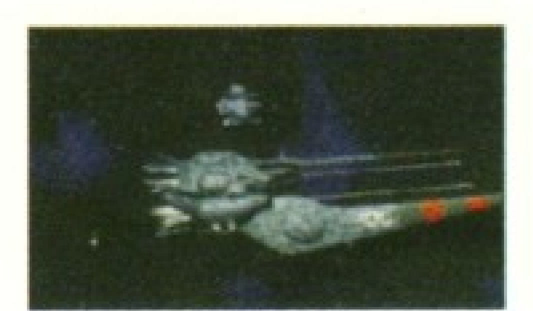
Back in the Seventies NASA sent the Pioneer exploration probe out into space. Its mission was simply to float away until it was gathered up by any potential life forms in the universe. On board, the Pioneer had the map coordinates for Earth as well as various items that might be of interest to aliens like what we look like, some of our scientific discoveries, a few famous works of art and, of course, a Richard Marx CD.

It was in fact the Richard Marx CD that first alerted the Kesh Rhan aliens to the presence of Pioneer moving through their solar system, containing as it did, what's known as the 'perm frequency'. Unfortunately this meant that the first burst of 'Right Here Waiting For You' made for a bizarre translation in the Rhan language with the resultant effect of suggesting the aliens 'come and have a go if they think they're hard enough'. And this is exactly what they did, prompting the moral of our story which is burn any Richard Marx CD's that might fall into your possession because to more advanced life forms he is in fact Satan.

But that's all by the by because the aliens are here, and Chaos Control sees them knocking about in Manhattan buying hot dogs, rollerblading through Central Park and annihilating the human race. Not for long though because with the help of your Virtua gun you can stop them.

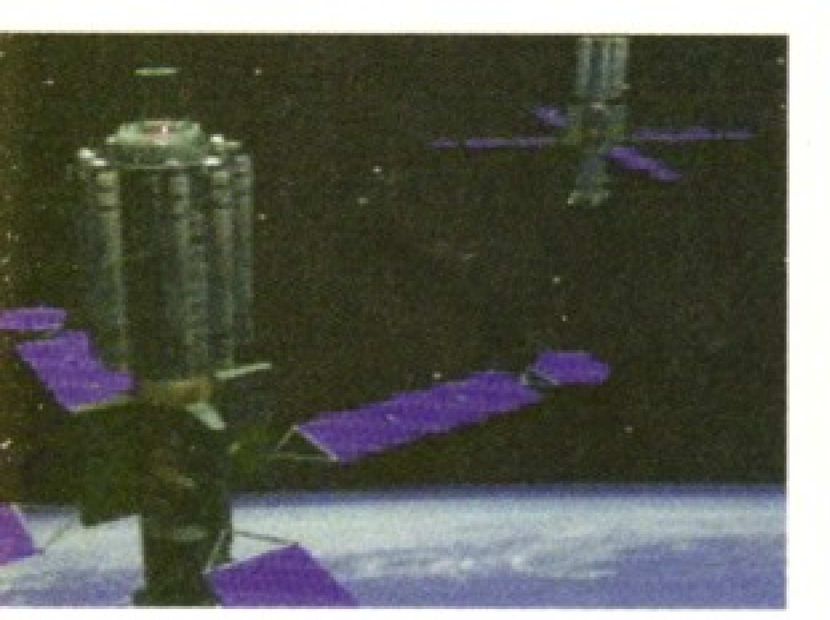
Now while any game that utilises the much neglected Virtua gun is welcome, it's obviously better if it had at least some of the style and panache of the game it was made for. Unfortunately Chaos Control has nothing of the sort and ends up as a bit of a shambles. One of the things that makes Virtua Cop so impressive is the suspense – you're always looking for enemies to pop up behind cars or leap out in front of you. All this is lost in Chaos Control which simply piles alien after alien in your face giving you no real opportunity to target, something which leaves







Space...it's really quite big isn't it. Pretty darn huge in fact.







Chaos Control features a variety of rendered cut sequences which inter-mingle with some very poorly drawn cartoons. It fills out what little there is of the story and links up the change from New York to outer space in as convenient a fashion as possible. When you finish the game after about half an hour, the scene is topped off with some congratulations and probably some surreptitious laughter from the programmers.

...while the objective might change, the mundaneness of the action certainly doesn't...

you firing at the screen quite indiscriminately.

As far as the graphics go things aren't quite so bad. There's a fairly good sense of depth and some of the rendering is quite polished, especially on the earlier sections set in New York. What isn't forgivable visually are the smoke effects left after an alien has been destroyed. They hang in the air for ages looking like mutant moulding candy floss and have a habit of seriously obscuring your view.

When the aliens have been chased off the Earth, the action switches to space where the objective becomes destroying the alien command ship. But while the objective might change, the mundaneness of the action certainly doesn't with the constant barrage of aliens and the occasional boss character turning up.

Just to top this disastrous package off, the whole game is over in about half an hour leaving you feeling like the time would have been better spent, well, doing absolutely nothing. Even simple things like giving you your hits ratio and percentage hasn't been included in Chaos Control, and while there's a two-player option, you'd be a bit mean to force a friend through the same dull experience. What's more, with the arrival of Virtua Cop imminent, you won't want to waste your money on this.

ROB





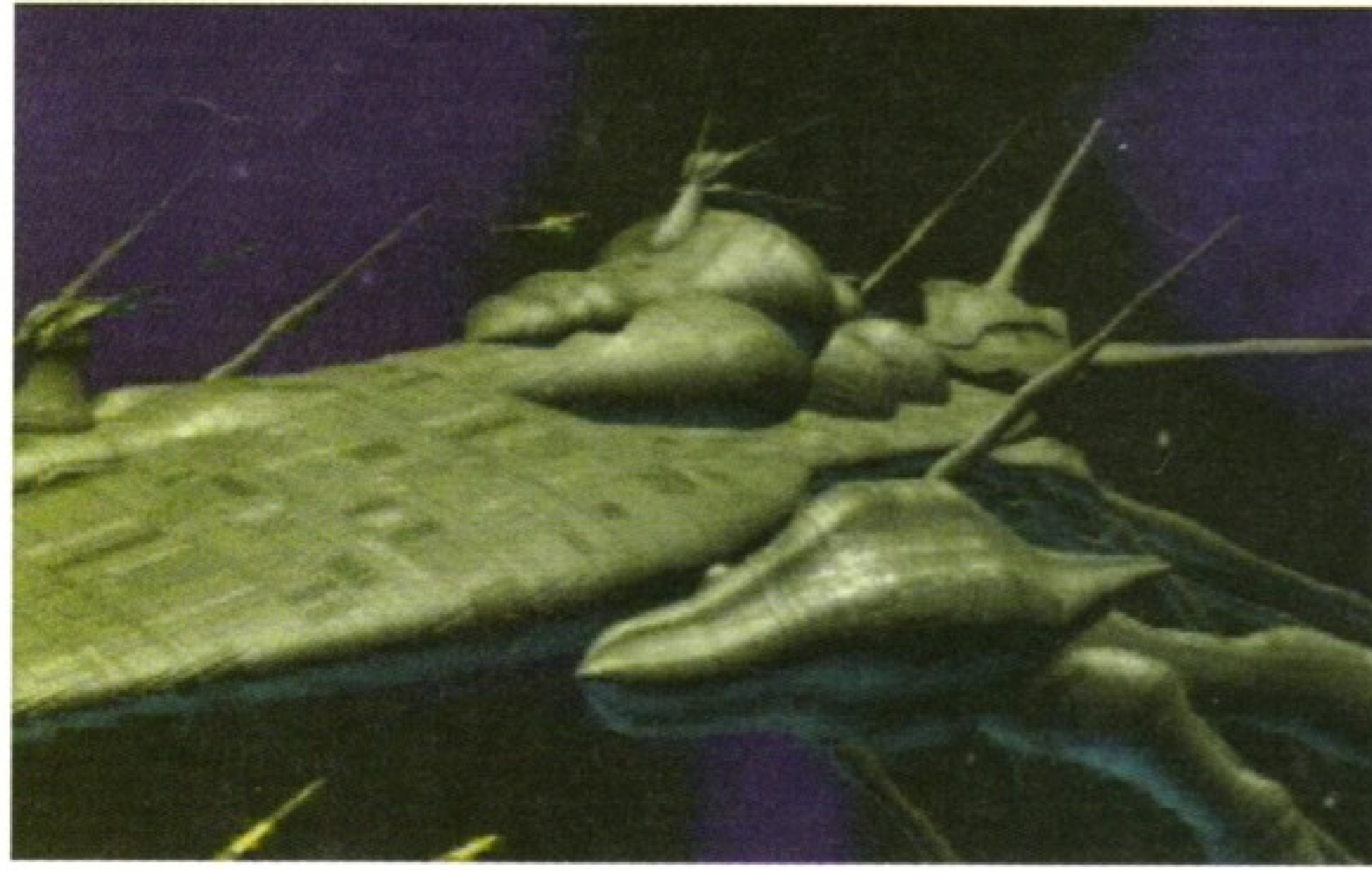
(Above) The green lasers are coming from the aliens.



THAT'S IT?

At various points during Chaos Control a boss character pops up to do battle with your shooting expertise. All the bosses are pretty much identical, their appearance resembling some kind of futuristic cyber knight. the odd thing about the bosses though is that you don't defeat them as such. You simply do battle with them for a while and they disappear. No explosions. Nothing. This is symptomatic of the half-baked way that Chaos control goes about things.





This huge and oddly shaped render is the enemy mothership. You have to destroy it at the end.





There's nothing quite as satisfying as a fine explosion. But as 3 reveals, it quickly transforms to cotton wool.

You might be desperate for games that utilise your Virtua gun but Chaos Control is one travesty that will have you pointing your gun at yourself for being fool enough to buy it.

graphics	76
sound	72
playability	60
lastability	52
overall	56%



3 DIRTY DWARVES

We previewed Three Dirty Dwarves way back in our August issue. Since then it's experienced various delays for reasons that remain largely mysterious. But who cares because here it is!...

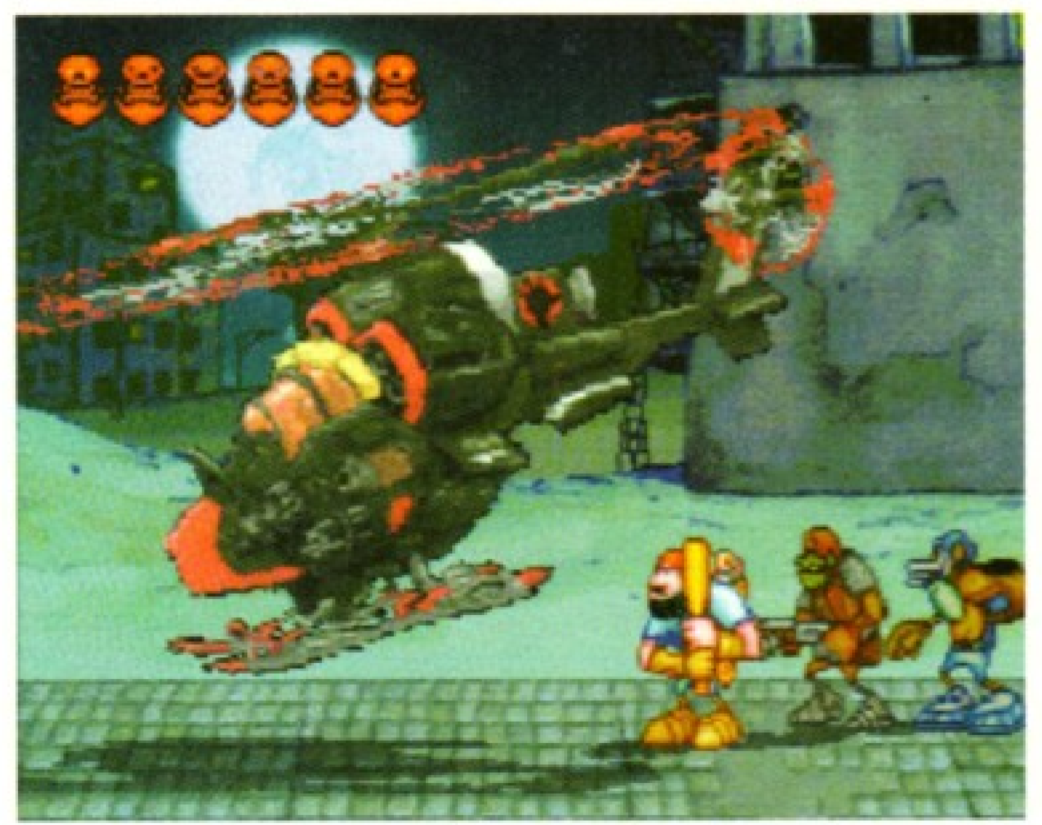
BY	SEGA
PRICE	£39.99
STYLE	PLATFORM/COMBAT
RELEASE	OUT NOW



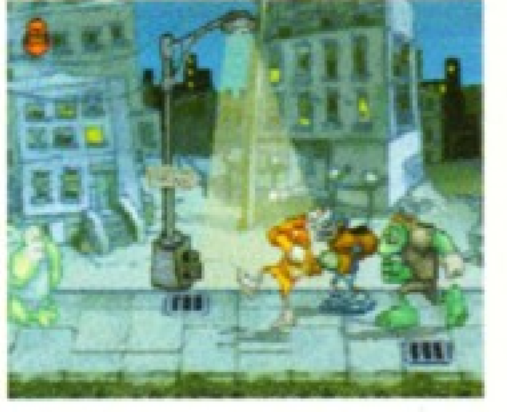


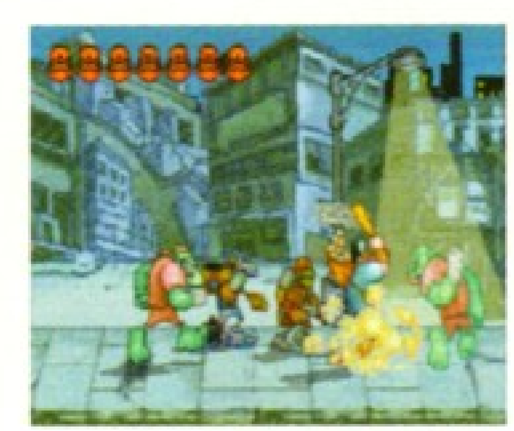
Oh yes – expect a rather laborious cartoon opening in Three Dirty Dwarves that isn't particularly funny.



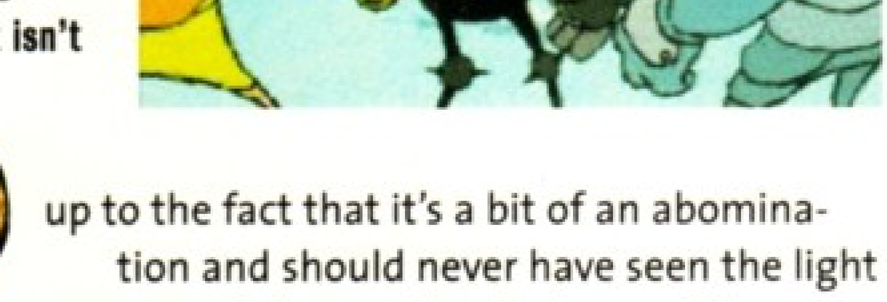


This giant helicopter is one of the boss characters in the game.



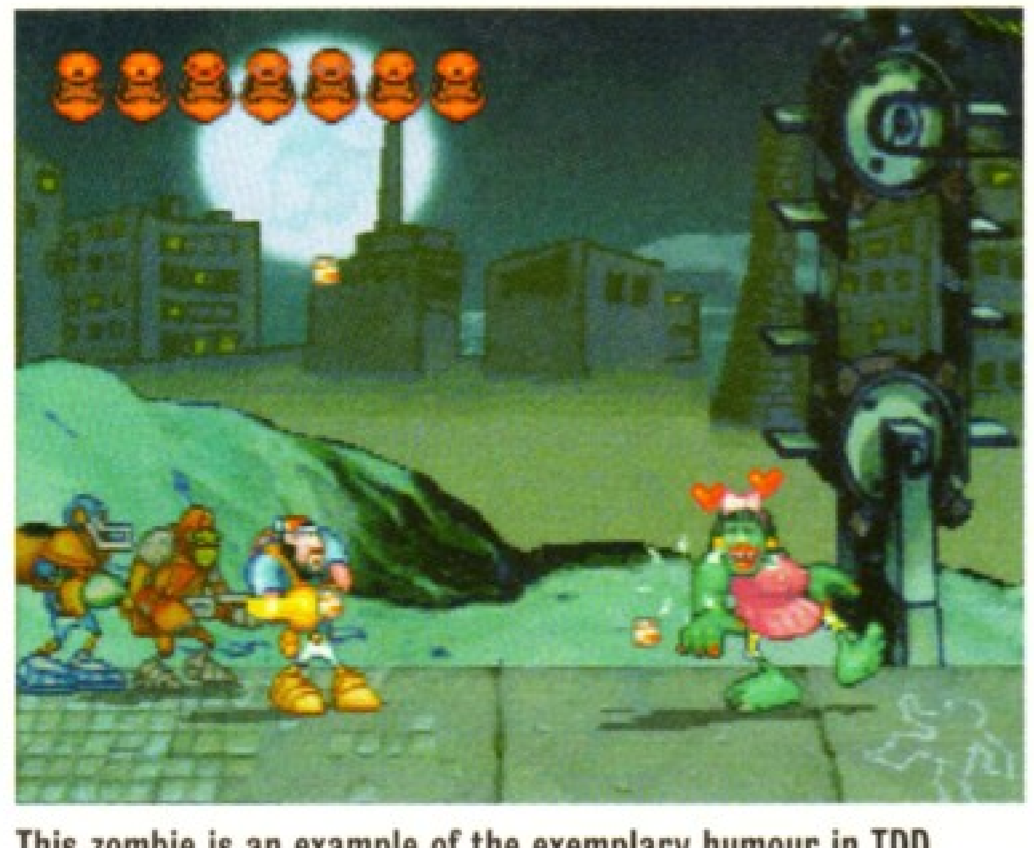


All of those icons in the top left mark the number of specials.



In dreams dwarves are meant to represent wisdom. Say for instance you're walking down the high street wearing only a pair of novelty Gladiator pants, a dwarf might turn up and offer a few pertinent comments like "Hey mate, I'd sort out some clothes out if I were you". Or maybe you're in a surreal record shop with a wolf and your great uncle, queuing up to buy the latest single by the Spice Girls. Up pops the stumpy one at the counter and simply laughs you away, his superpowers forcing you to return the offending item to the rack. It reminds me of the old saying; you'll never go short in life, so long as there's a dwarf around. Or something like that.

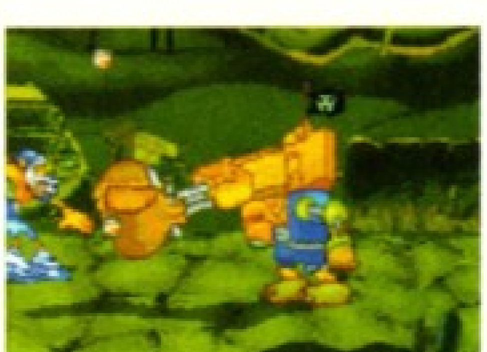
You'd think that with three dwarves in Three Dirty Dwarves this game would have wised up to the fact that it's a bit of an abomination and should never have seen the light of day – or the darkness of the unconscious for that matter. Yet here it is, a very irritating and mundane platform game borrowing something from the Guardian Heroes style, except any quality of course. But before we go into that, I'll quickly explain the chucklesome premise of the game. The three dirty dwarves in question are all on the screen at once although you only control one of them at any given time. Having said that, a quick tap of the button lets you change who you're controlling. Each of our vertically challenged heroes wields their own weapon, be it a gun, a baseball bat or a bowling pin. More than this though, each of them can use their weapon in two ways; rather than fire the gun you might like to swipe people with the butt. Or how about making novel use of the baseball bat by actually pitching



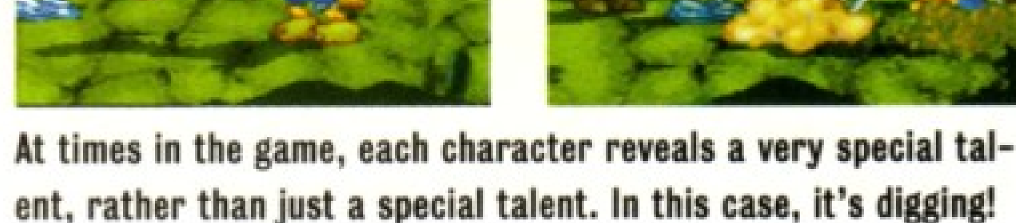
This zombie is an example of the exemplary humour in TDD.







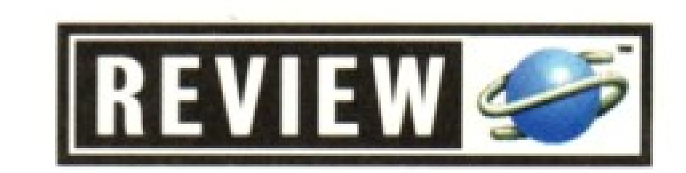


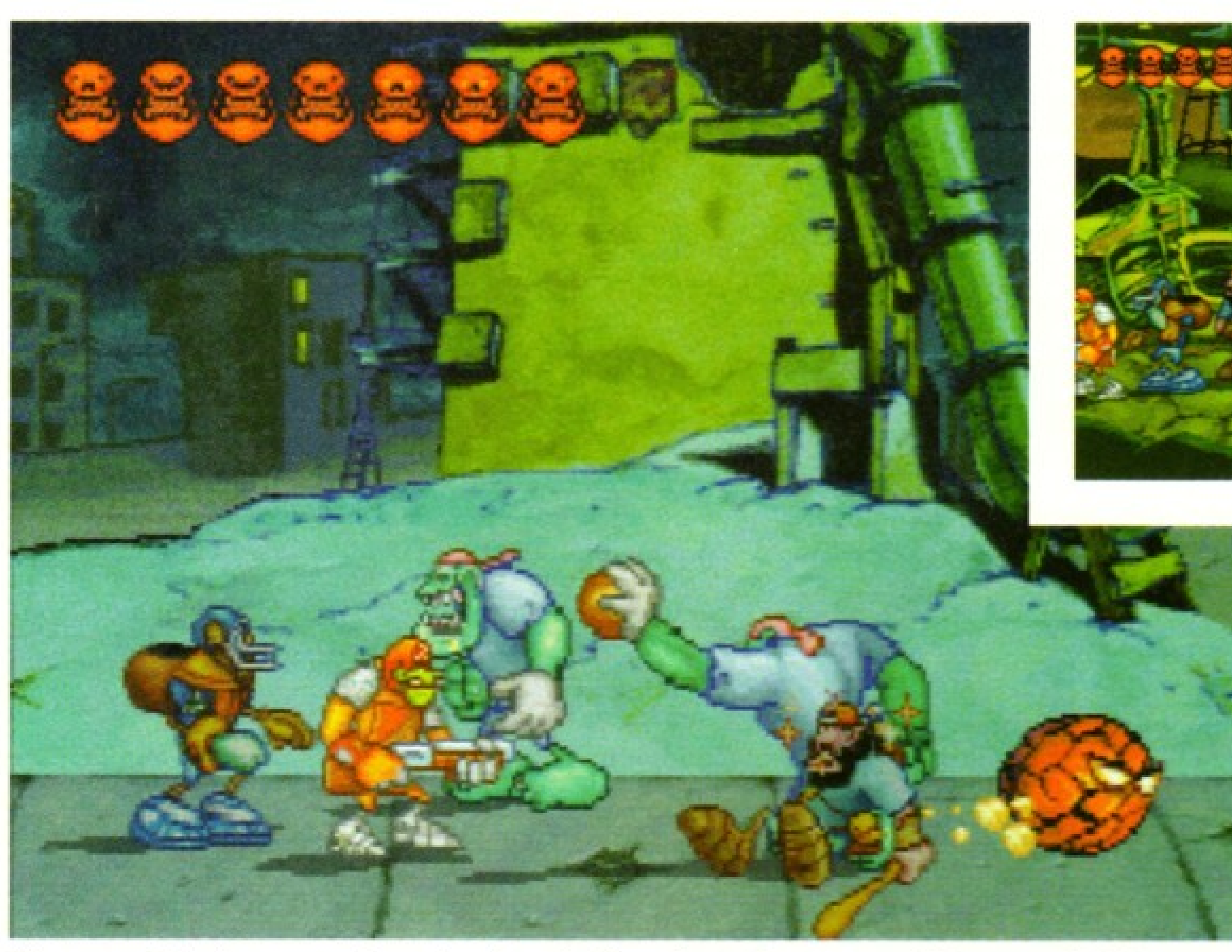


At times in the game, each character reveals a very special talent, rather than just a special talent. In this case, it's digging!



This part of the game sees the team going round in circles.





When one of the dwarves ends up dazed on the floor, he can't get up until his mates kick him.



(Above) Wow! Check that guy out! He's a weird pink sort of thing. Now that's just really craaaaaazzeee!!

THREE SHIRTY DWARVES

As exploitative circus managers would be apt to point out, three dwarves are better than one. This is especially true where this game is concerned.. You see, while each dwarf is pretty tough by himself, get the three together in a team attack and they're pretty much invincible. They do this, hilariously enough by brawling with each other, but such is the mayhem they cause in the process that any enemy near by is quickly drawn into the fray and dispatched just as fast. You can pick up team power-ups from various places, and it's essential to have plenty of them if you want to make quick progress through the game. Or putting it another way, to get it over and done with.





This, I'm sure you'll agree, is almost as funny as a room full of Jimmy Tarbuck clones.

yourself a few baseballs to aim at enemies rather than attacking them directly. Finally, our dwarf with the bowling pin also has the ability to throw bowling balls.

With their talents thus established, the plucky trio start out on their side-scrolling beat 'em up adventure in the streets of New York. Enemies come thick and fast from both directions, most of which are in keeping with the comic premise of the game. For example, there's an hilarious scene involving a hard thug type and an old granny which ends with the thug running off blubbing thanks to a handbag slap. This, I'm sure you'll agree, is almost as funny as a room full of Jimmy Tarbuck clones.

Anyway, things continue in a pretty similar vain with the truncated trio tackling a variety of hazards from cars whizzing by to the renewal of the good old mine cart level. Graphically this is pretty basic stuff, although this would be easily forgivable were it not for the monotony of the gameplay. It starts as it means to go on, and go on it certainly does, ploughing through the same old routines time and again. The idea of having three characters on screen seems like a nice idea and the way in which you flick between them is done quite proficiently. It will quickly dawn on you however that doing this is largely pointless seeing as each of the characters plays exactly the same, despite the cosmetic differences in weapons.

Sega's reputation for putting out consistently good games has been more than justified over the last year, but where Three Dirty Dwarves is concerned you'll be forced to find them guilty of both a lack of imagination and a particularly lame sense of humour.

ROB



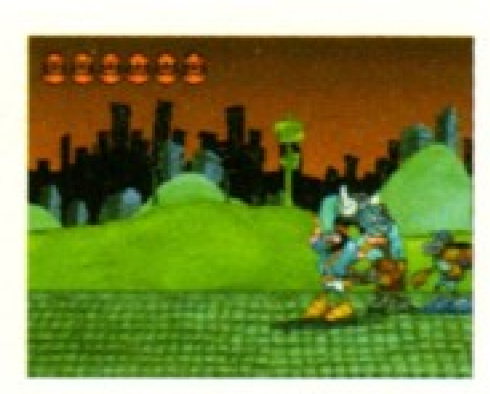
The lady with the handbag...



...slaps the bully! Hahahaha!



These are the offices that were home to the programmers of TDD.



More jaywalking going dahn.



It just gets funnier eh?

There's nothing terribly wrong with Three Dirty Dwarves but then there's nothing terribly right with it either. Essentially it's the repetitive nature of the gameplay and the naff game concept that let it down.

graphics	72
sound	70
playability	65
lastability	63

overall

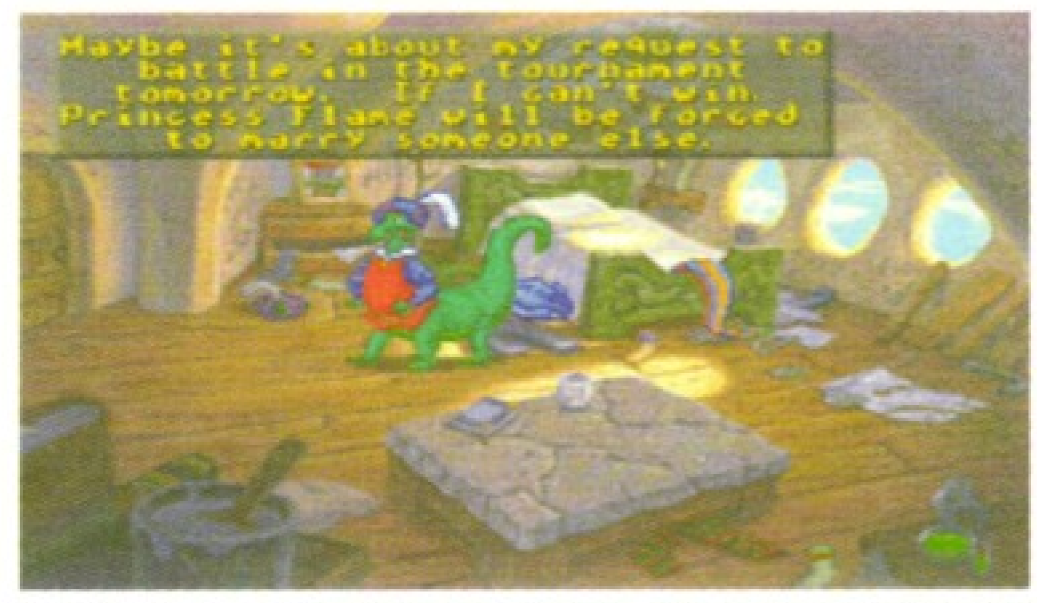


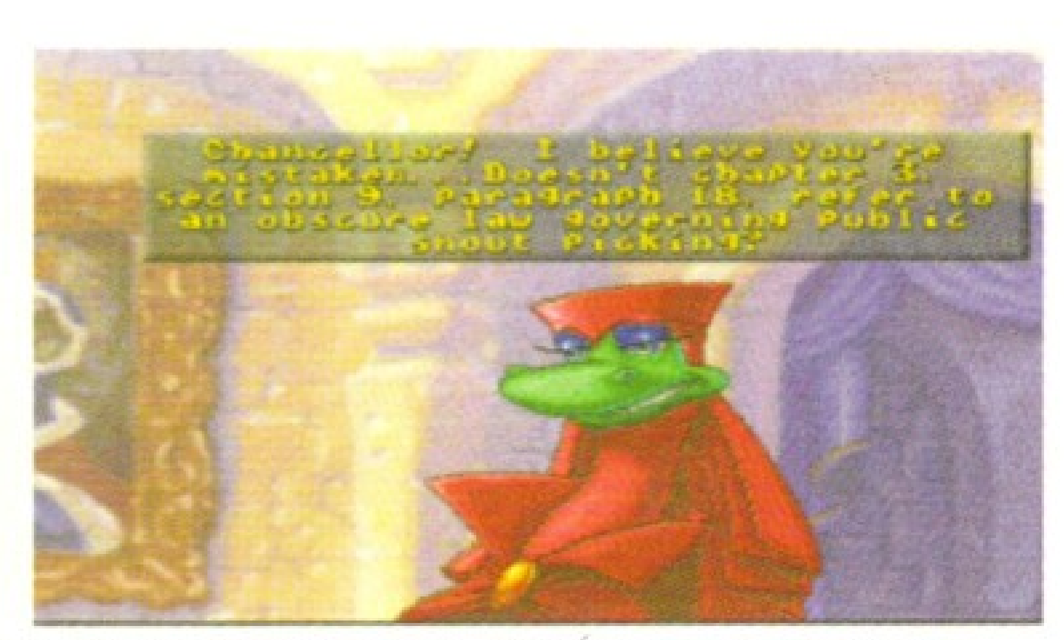


BLAZING DRAGONS

Re-live all your favourite moments from the riotous cartoon romp which is Blazing Dragons with this, the Blazing Dragons Interactive CD-ROM Role-Playing Product. Available wherever you see lunchboxes.

BY	CRYSTAL DYNAMICS
PRICE	£TBA
STYLE	RPG
RELEASE	NOVEMBER

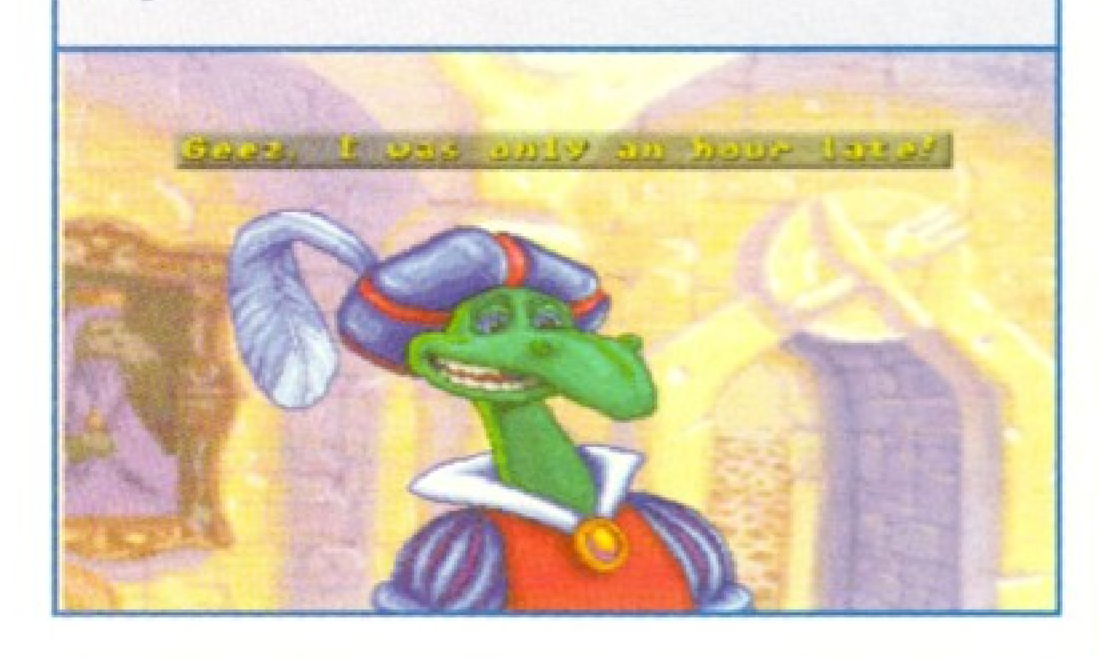




Well that's the entire plot out of the way then. Even if you're familair with the dreadful cartoon, Blazing Dragons is pretty limp.

WHAT'S THE STORY (DRAGON BOREY)?

The player controls a young dragon called Flicker, the royal inventor residing in Castle Camelhot. There's this royal tournament, right, and in order to marry the beautiful (in dragon terms) Princess Flame he's got to win it. But he can't enter unless he's a knight, and right now Flicker isn't even a squire. Plus, right, there are these evil humans who've enlisted a mysterious dragon to fight in the tournament, right, and if he wins the evil humans will take over at the royal palace. Don't ask how that happens, because it isn't explained very well. Anyway, your missions, should you choose to accept them, are to first be made a squire, then a knight, and win the tournament. How exciting.



"I can't do that here". "It would be like talking to a wall". "I can't do that here". "I couldn't lift that". "I can't do anything". "I can't do anything". Get used to reading this sort of stuff before you pick up Blazing Dragons. Because you'll be having a lot of it. You see, Blazing Dragons is a comedy fantasy adventure. In the true modern style, it's loaded to its scaly gills with sampled speech from "real" actors (ie – ones that don't get much work). And, so BMG could get their money's worth, there's about a hundred thousand different useless nonsense phrases and not-hilarious jokes planted around the game.

The sad truth of the matter is that, if you can't afford a decent scriptwriter, you're way better off cutting out the humour angle in adventures. Not because it isn't funny, although it usually isn't, but because it slows down the pace of an already sedate genre to a frustrating extent. And when it comes down to it, "I can't do that here" is the one you're going to hear more than anything. Having it sometimes phrased as "Don't be stupid – try again" or "I'll carry on – but I won't carry that" does nothing to alleviate the torture.

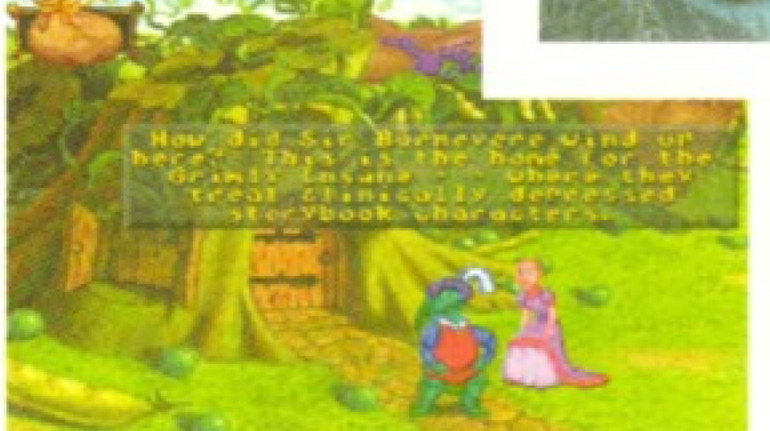


And it's voiced by Jacko out of Brush Strokes. I think.

Anyway, the point of these games isn't the dialogue, thankfully, but the puzzles and the plot. The former provide the meat of the gameplay, and the latter holds your interest in the proceedings when the puzzles take a turn for the frustrating. So if a game engages your brain enough it can be forgiven for bypassing your humour glands. So it's a bit of a shame that Blazing Dragons, aside from being one of the most cringeworthily irritating unfunny games ever, also features one of the most poorly explained, obvious, derivative and dull plots ever. Still, it could be worse. The puzzles could mostly centre around the flimsy "I'm an inventor" premise of the central character. Oh d'oh! They do! Either that or they've got some-



This is your inventions book which gives everything away. It's dead good.





He's played Blazing Dragons.



Aah yes, that little phrase which so easily works its way into conversation. "I have all the information I need". I'm always saying that, me.



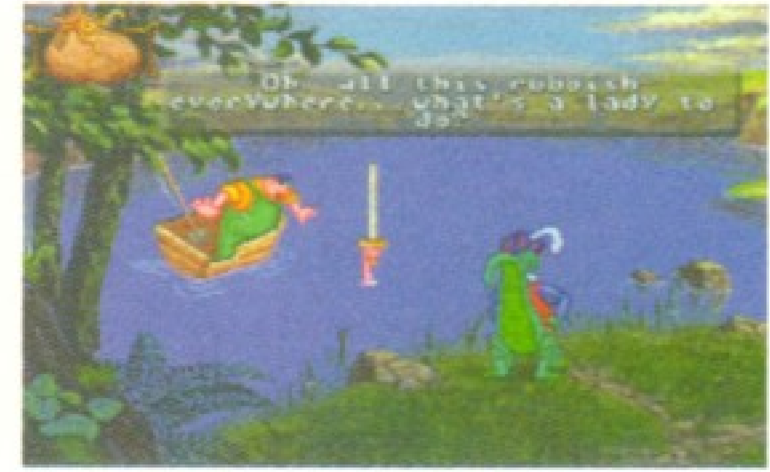
This is the hilarious "cat-a-pult" sub-game.



Someone should tell the RSPCA if you ask me.



Don't expect many laughs in this scene.



Hilarious jokes like this abound.



More hilarious dialogue in evidence here, as Flicker shows his razor-sharp wit to a man with a haircut.



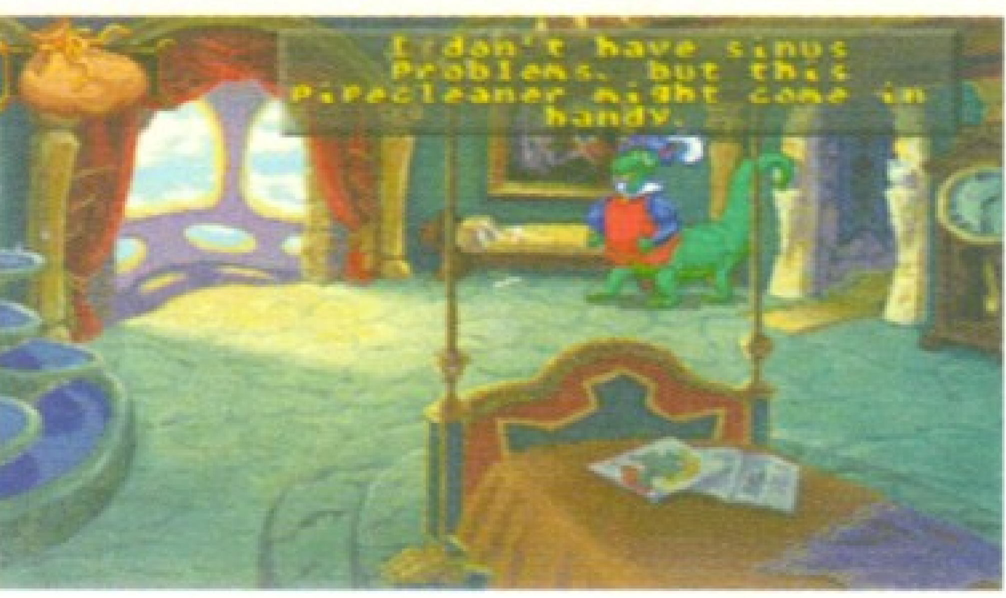
A map. The funniest bit.



Apart from this bag.

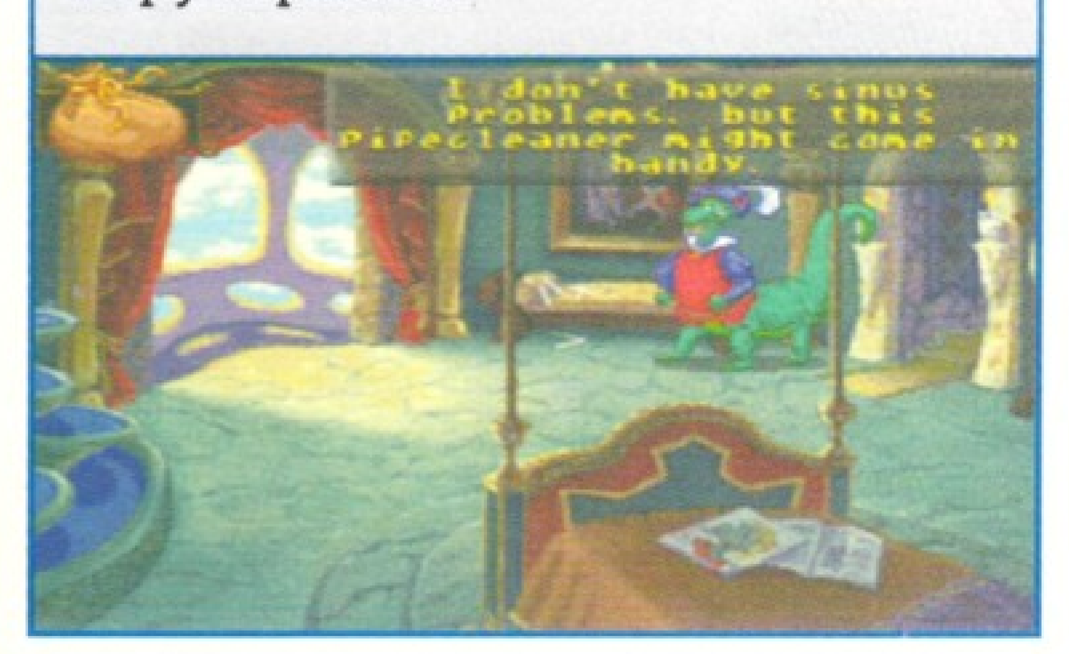



The many and varied facial expressions of our hero on display.




HOW TO "CONTROL" THE "GAME"

Prize for Dumbass Interface of the Month goes to... Blazing Dragons! BD runs on four basic commands – walk, look, pick up and speak. So of course the obvious thing to do is use the A or C button to cycle through the possible commands and the B button to activate it. There's no need to assign some of the Saturn's eight joypad buttons to individual tasks to make life easier. The only decent shortcut is using X to access your inventory. Otherwise the rest of the time it's cycle cycle... gone past it... cycle... that's it... oops, gone past it, as you struggle gamely to keep your patience.





Oh sorry forgot about this bit of the plot. You've got to win a tournament. Shouldn't be too difficult then. Doubtless it'll include some kind of hilarious invention.

thing to do with the hilarious fairy-tale-characters-against-the-humans setting of the title. And it's not like they're that hard. It's way more a matter of having the right objects at the right time than working out complex streams of actions relevant to the storyline.

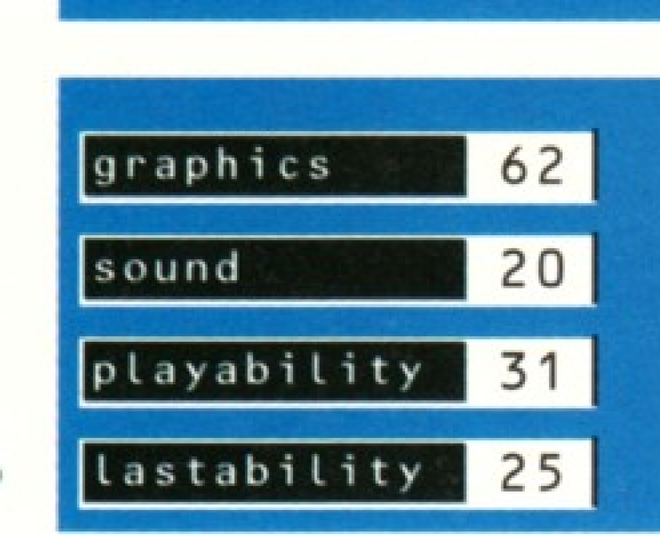
Still, Myst didn't exactly have the most complex interface in the world, and everyone thought was ace. And it was, because the graphics are a-may-zing. Burning Dragons, on the other hand, looks crap. Sure, some of the "hand-painted" backgrounds are detailed, but they're still boring. As for the sprites – frankly I could have done better myself with a magic marker on the back of a stamp. The animation is weak, the characters unappealing and badly drawn. Basically there's about as much chance of the cast of Blazing Dragons being so charismatic they rescue the title as there is of me getting to the end of this review without saying anything more bad about it. Things are made even worse than they already are (which is very bad) by the voice over. Alright, you can at least turn this off, but that defies the point of such a game. The point is that you sit there with a fixed grin rictus on your face forcing yourself to listen to some third-rate thespians put on their comedy accent trousers in a vain attempt to play the "wacky" card. It doesn't work. It just makes everything drag on ten times longer as an ex-EastEnders extra dra-aws out ev-er-y syllable... for comedic... mm... effect, what.

With a bit more thought Blazing Dragons... wouldn't have been released, to be honest. Everything from the title screen (which was produced with the aid of a Commodore 64) to everything else screams "Look at me – I'm no good!". Even the play interface is cumbersome, and given that it consists of only four actions that's some going.

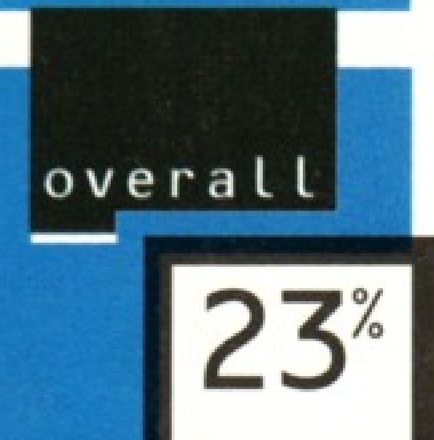
ROB

Blazing Dragons is one of the most cringeworthily irritating unfunny games of all time...

It might be worth a look if you've got small children around the house and you'd like to get them from under your feet for a while. Although they'll soon be traipsing up to you shouting "I'm booored".



graphics	62
sound	20
playability	31
lastability	25





CRIMEWAVE

Traffic problems are a major concern of the Twentieth century. I say fit guns to every car and have motorists fight for their road space! Another sensible policy for a happier Britain!

BY	EIDOS
PRICE	£39.99
STYLE	RACING/SHOOTING
RELEASE	OUT NOW



1. This is buggy that starts you off on the Beach stage. 2. This is the car chosen for the Industrial stage. 3. Your average motor. 4. Hey it's a pink Cadillac! 5. The tank turns up as one of the boss cars when you're close to the cash target. 6. Likewise with this car.

It finally happened. After everything else had been sold off – including the Houses of Parliament which were converted into a MacDonalds multi-plex – the government decided it was time to privatise the police force. After all, they'd had a monopoly on the crime industry for far too long, and who's to say that a little competition wouldn't be beneficial. As far as the privatisation of traffic policing went there were plenty of takers – Express Dairys, HGV companies, and of course, loads of cab firms. Ok, so the sight of Alan's Cabs fitting machine guns and rocket launchers to their fleet of Granadas might seem a bit worrying at first, but at least cabbies would now have a legitimate excuse for driving like psychotics. And besides, despite their new law-enforcing responsibilities, they never gave up those little air fresheners that hang from dashboards or rear-view mirrors.

Whether or not you, the player, are an ex-cabbie is entirely up to you. You can be an ex-erotic dancer for all I care. The point to remember is that as a maverick street cop, you stop at nothing to bag the bad guy and pick up your earnings. Being of mercenary spirit, you don't care if this involves blasting innocent drivers off the road. It only incurs a small penalty anyway, and so long as you destroy your target, you get a fat pay check along with whatever you can salvage from the wreckage – stuff like rockets, mines and fuel. To enter new and more fruitful patrol territories you have to have collected enough money to be allowed through the gates. The patrol areas vary enormously, from a post-industrial wasteland, akin to something like

The point to remember is that as a maverick street cop, you stop at nothing to bag the bad guy...



(Above) Your fuel might be down to level 2 but there are power-ups to collect.



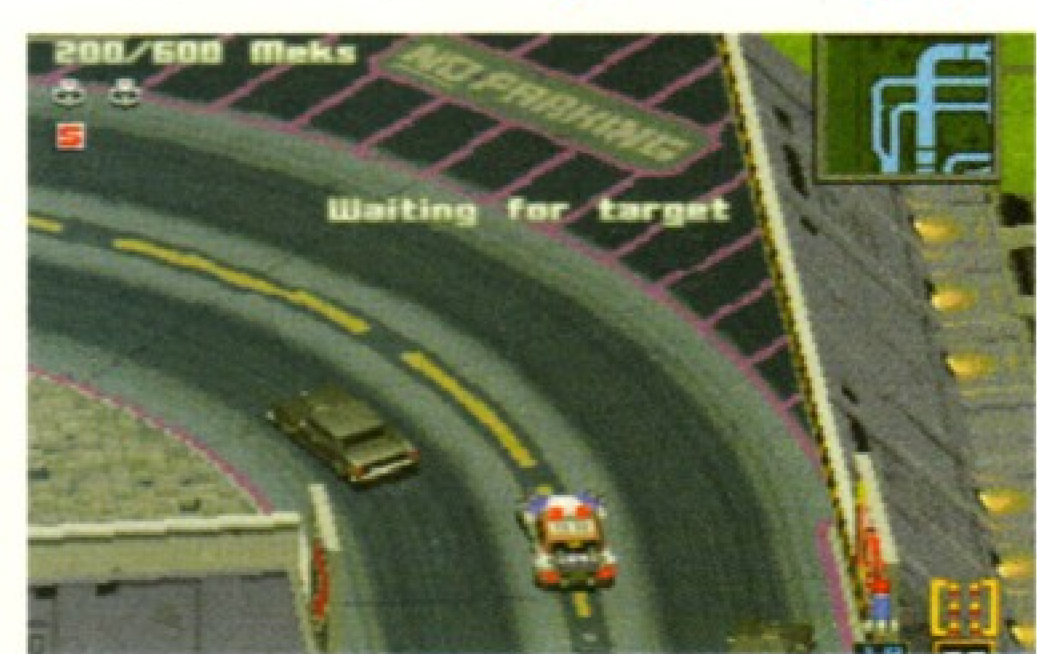


Your target is no more!

Ignore the highway code.

The arrow points to where your target is.

Destroying innocent cars earns you a penalty.



(Above) That's a civilian car in front. Destroy it! Hahaha!



There's your target buddy. Now blow it and let's go home.



You've nearly reached the 600 Meks target to finish the level.





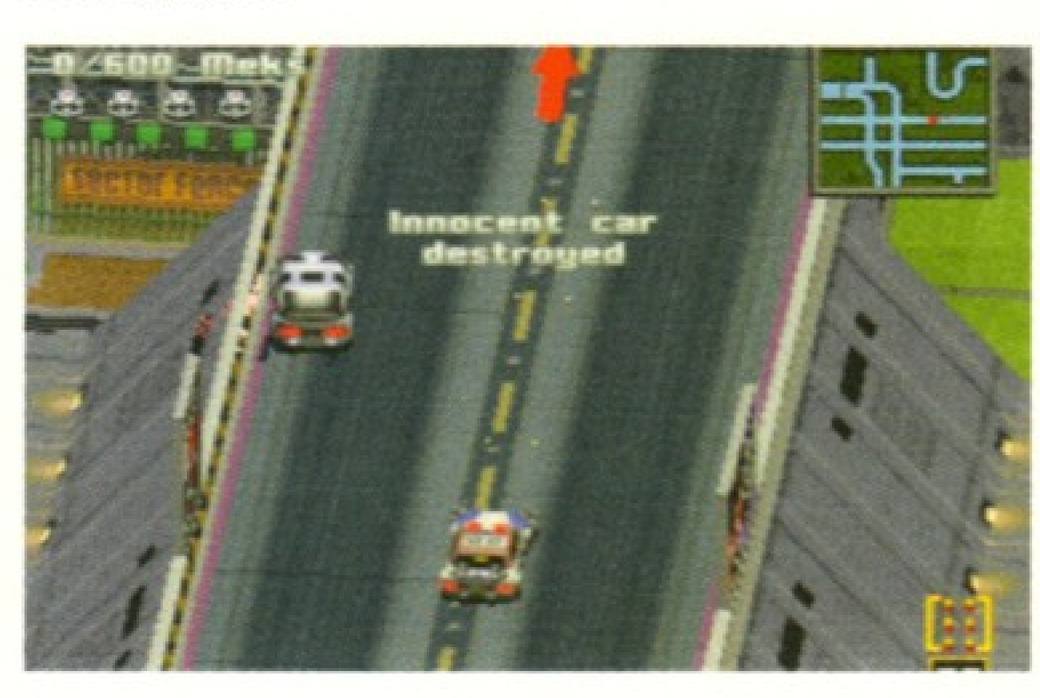




That smoke coming out of the back of your car is obviously not a good sign. You'll want to get some power-ups fast if you're to survive. Or Phil Mitchell. So long as he's not on the sauce.



So yet another innocent is destroyed. I ask you readers – is it worth it? All this suffering for the want of a farthing? Of course it is!! Hahahaha!





The intro sequence in Crimewave is very slick indeed, right down to the reflection of the lights on the car windscreens. It shows the cars knocking about, caught in the thrill of the chase. It's just a shame the game itself fails to deliver such excitement.

Sheffield, to the luxurious environs of roads by the beach reminiscent of Santa Cruz. There are a total of eight in all.

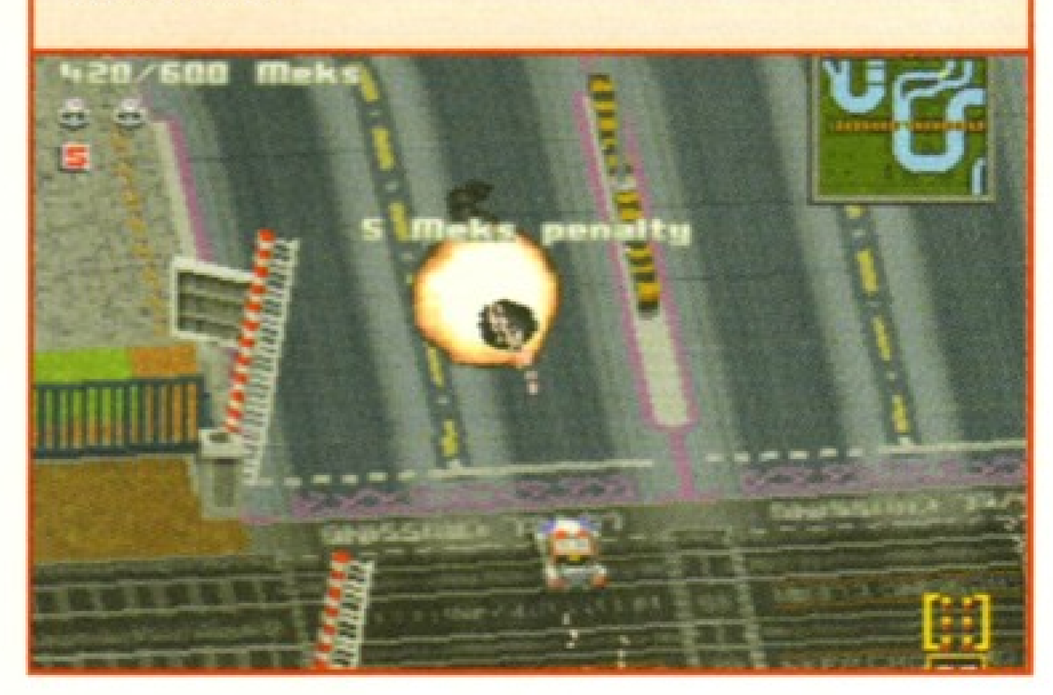
Visually this all seems pretty promising, what with the detailed isometric 3D settings, right down to ads on billboards or plants hanging from the doors of suburban houses. Likewise the cars which are treated to similar care, varying in style from ostentatious 1950's Cadillacs to futuristic buggys. As for the action, it perhaps promises more than it actually delivers. You drive around waiting for a target to appear – indicated by a red arrow – and when it does, you chase it through the streets and gun it down when it comes into range. Another danger to watch for are rival vigilantes who'll try to gun you down if they come across you. When a target is destroyed and you've picked up the cash (or Meks as they're entitled in the game) then its off to find another car. And so it goes on, and I couldn't help feeling it all got a tad repetitive. This isn't helped by the fact that the car is sometimes frustrating to control, fast turns proving particularly awkward at times. Also, the 'innocent' cars have an uncanny habit of obstructing your chase, and although this is obviously designed to make things a bit more challenging it also has the habit of getting plain annoying. Likewise, trying to stay on the road is sometimes hard enough and although the buildings all look quite nice your car has a habit of ping-ponging between them meaning you lose precious time in a chase.

Despite my criticisms I wouldn't want to run Crimewave down too hard. It does have a bit going for it, and if you're prepared to forgive some of the more irritable aspects of the game, you can still glean some enjoyment from the blast 'em up action and the challenge of entering new stages where the enemies are more multitudinous and the streets more chaotic. All in all though, this is more of a Crimeripple than a Crimewave.

ROB

MONEY TALKS AND BULL WALKS

When a yellow arrow appears on the screen as opposed to a red one, it denotes that a rival is invading your patch. If this is the case there's only one option open to you and that's to blow their metal hide off the highway. They won't hesitate in doing the same to you after all. Another problem you'll face if you don't dispose of them is the chance of them coming in and stealing targets from you – that means losing money, and business being business, you've little choice but to crush them! Hahahaha!





Yes! Destroy the barriers with a casual abandon.



The guy in the van is nearly history. Finish 'em off.



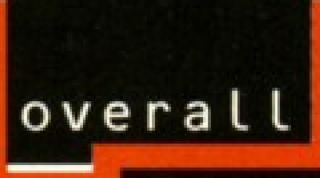




When a target bites the bullet a lovely orange explosion erupts. In fact, the pattern reminds me of the orange cheesecake that my dear grandmother makes.

Although Crimewave has its moments, it's let down by gameplay that's too repetitive and controls that are often frustrating.

graphics	82
sound	80
playability	71
lastability	74
overall	73



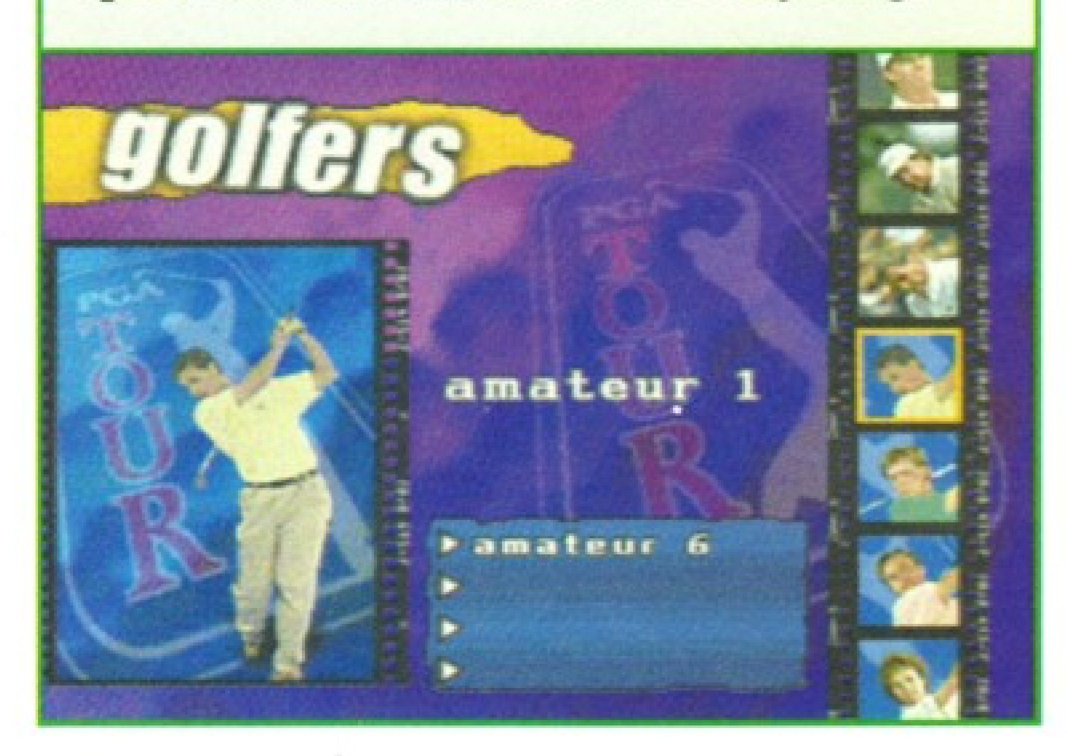
PGA GOLF

Oh no! Your dad is going to appropriate your Saturn this Christmas! You won't get a chance to play all those new games you got as presents! Why? Because here comes a golf sim!

BY	EA
PRICE	£39.99
STYLE	SPORTS SIM
RELEASE	DECEMBER

FAMILIAR FACES?

If you're not that up on your golf (and after all, it's a pretty boring sport to watch) then you won't know that the PGA Tour is all about American golfers strolling about courses from the east to the west putting away. This version of PGA features sixteen of America's finest in all, most of which you won't recognise, apart from maybe Craig Stadler and Fuzzy Zoeller. Look out for some classic American names like Chip Beck and Brad Faxon as well. It's just a shame there's no one in there called Dwight Speddlehacker. Still, can't have everything.



That blue wobbly thing is what's known in the trade as a 'lake'.

The little window shows you where the ball is going to land.

If your dad decides to buy you a golf sim as a present this Christmas then beware! It means you'll end up helping your mum cook the roast turkey, or find yourself watching endless Christmas repeats on TV. The reason for this is that just about every dad in the known universe will spend endless hours on your Saturn playing a golf sim under the rather feeble excuse that it's golf after all and not some pointless computer game. There is of course only one way to get your dad off the machine and that's to give him a drubbing that's humiliating enough to cause him to vacate the area mumbling 'ungrateful youth' and 'grounded' under his breath.

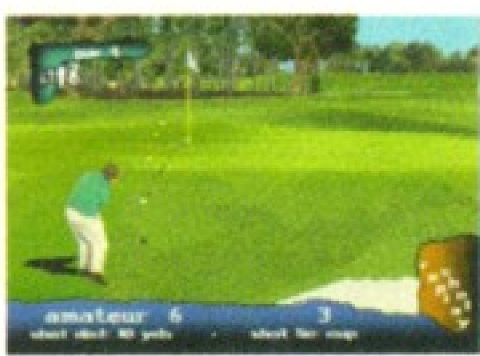
Just whether your dad will want to spend much time on PGA Tour is another matter. Firstly he'll complain about the lengthy loading times, even between one shot and another, and with good reason too. It's difficult to understand why it takes the game so long to register a stroke when even rather shoddy golf sims like Valora Valley manage to do it faster. This constant delay naturally has a habit of ruining the flow of the game, meaning you'll spend too much time simply getting frustrated at waiting. It's symptomatic of the game as a whole really. Take the power bar for instance. Like most golf sims it consists of an almost circular bar but the gauge is an odd shadowy colour that not only

Just whether your dad will want to spend much time on PGA Tour is another matter.

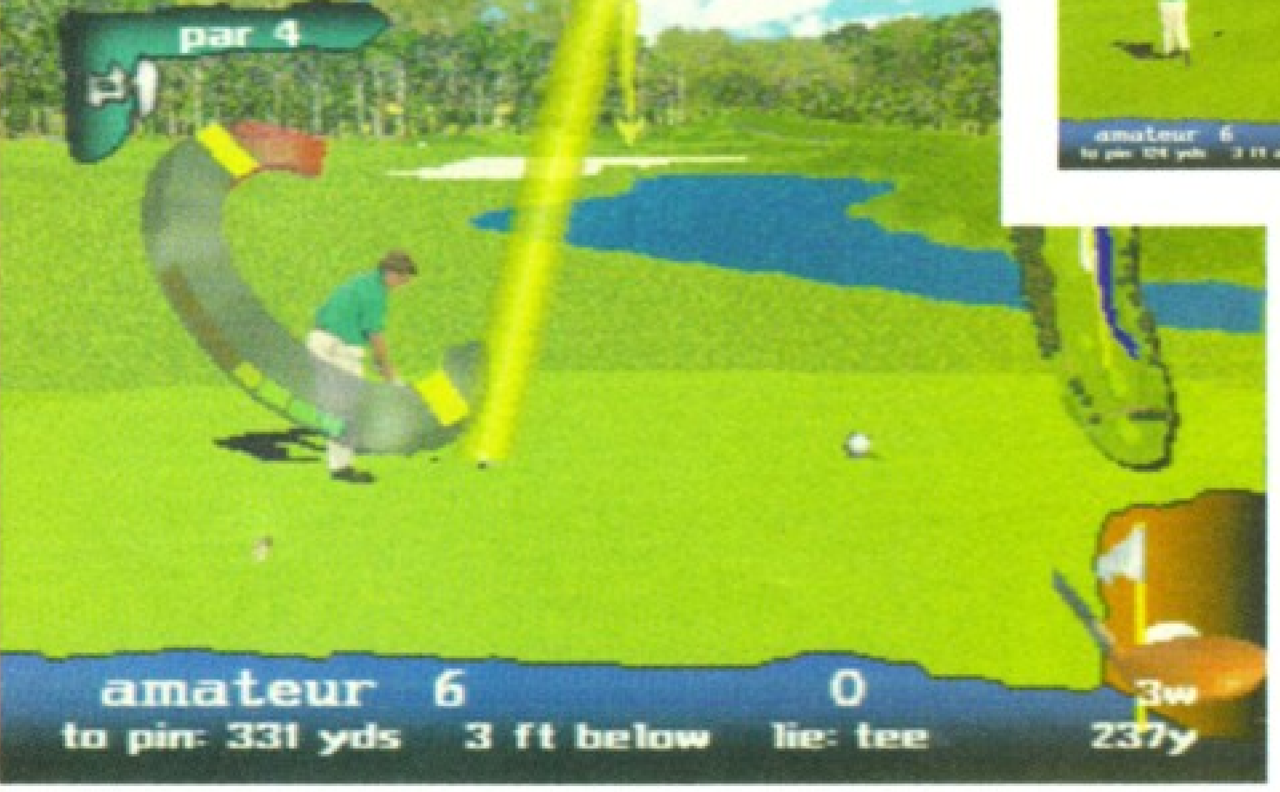




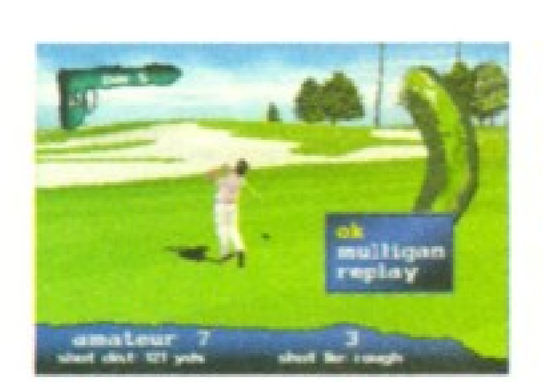




There's a voice, keeps on calling me. Down the golf club, that's where I'll always be. Each step I take, I make a...

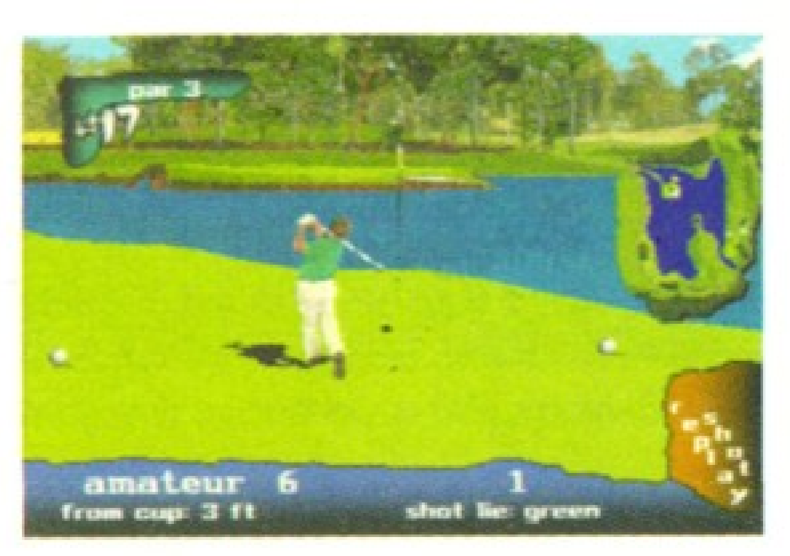


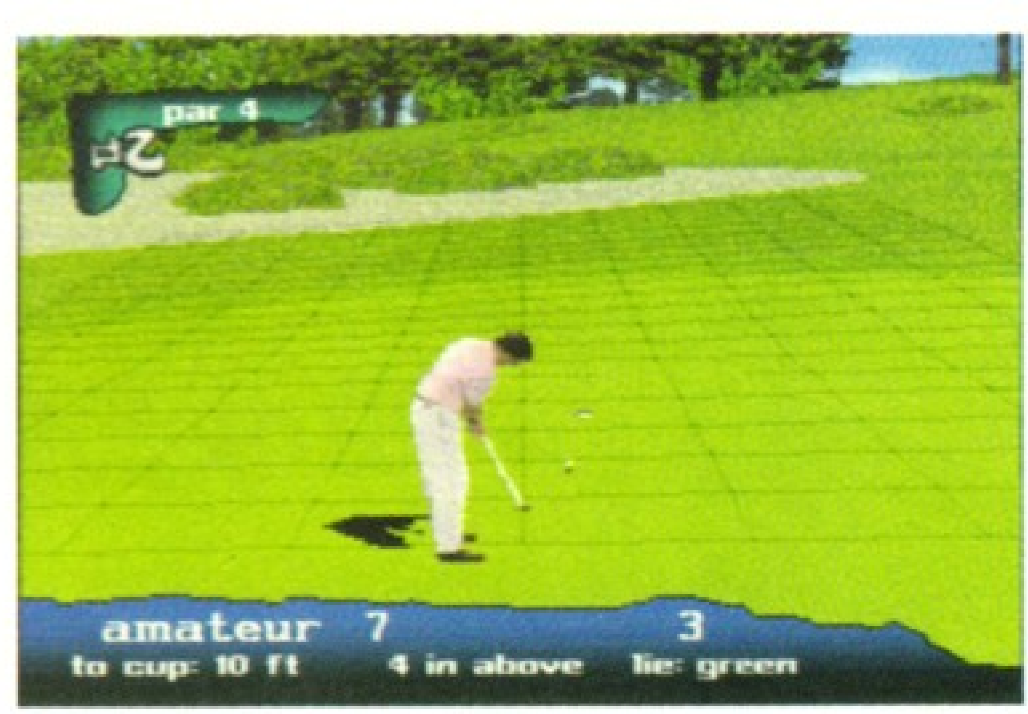
And so, using the mighty power of Mumrah, Amateur Joe summoned the spirit of the 'vast banana' to guide him to victory!! And then he came to rule the world!! Hahahahaha!



Fancy a mulligan or o'hare?







When you make it to the putting green, a grid is marked out to reveal the lay of the green. But just you spare a thought for old Jack McGraw who spends all his nights with only a ruler, a pen and a box of matches for company.

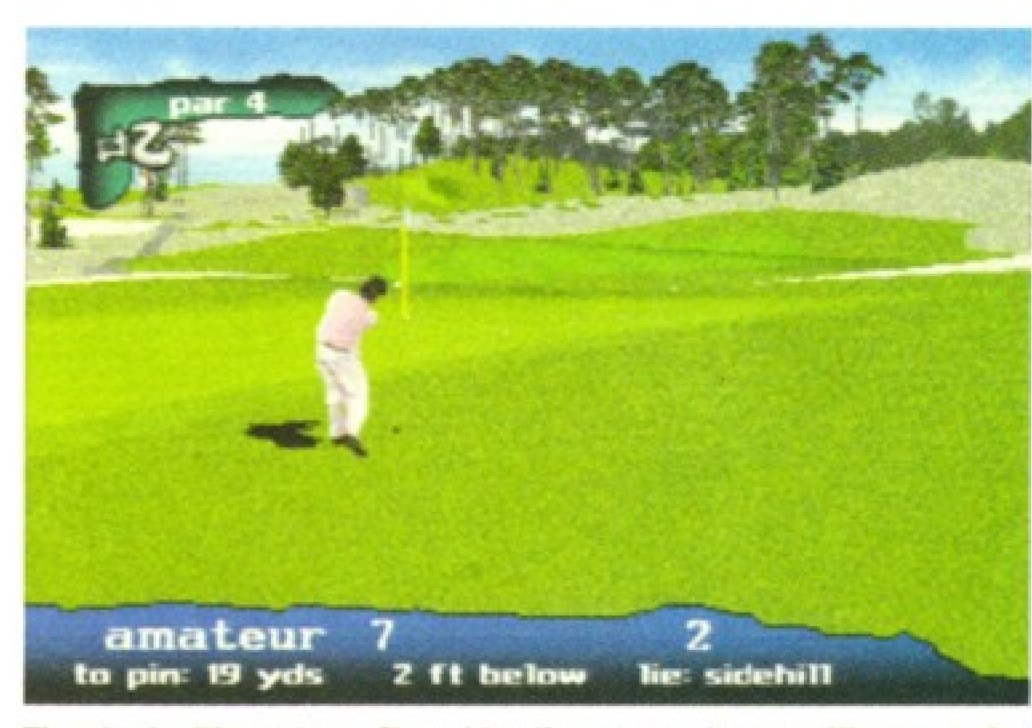
makes it a bit vague to look at at times but also harder to judge the exact point that it's on the line. Again, the reasons why the programmers would make such an error seems a little baffling. It is perhaps something to do with the nature of golf as a whole. In essence, the original PGA Tour on the Megadrive already had the whole control method down to a tee (ha ha) meaning that golf games since have relied largely on new novelties in the playability and, more justifiably, the graphics and presentation. In this instance it would seem that PGA Tour has tried to fix what was never broken and managed to do itself nothing but harm in the process.

The graphics are ok, but PGA Tour features nothing in the way of alternative camera angles to make it easier to size up your shot. There's a commentator sporting the usual over-enthusiastic American drawl and the standard range of twittering bird samples to enhance that natural feel.

Options wise things are no different from usual. You can choose to play either a full eighteen hole round or simply select the courses you'd like to practice on. The game also features 14 real golfers and eight amateur golfers which you can customise. There are only two courses, Sawgrass and Spygrass, both of which are real all-American venues.

As has been mentioned, the inevitable similarity of golf sims means that for a title to stand out as particularly impressive, it has to be a matter of refinement more than innovation. Unfortunately where PGA is concerned you get neither. Actua Golf remains the definitive golf sim for both you and your dad.

ROB



That looks like quite a fine chip. Not as good as you'll see at the Golden Fish Bar but fine nonetheless...Boom boom.



What clubs to choose eh? Oh the agony of choice. Personally I'd take the ones with sticks on the end.

...the reasons why the programmers would make such an error seems a little baffling.

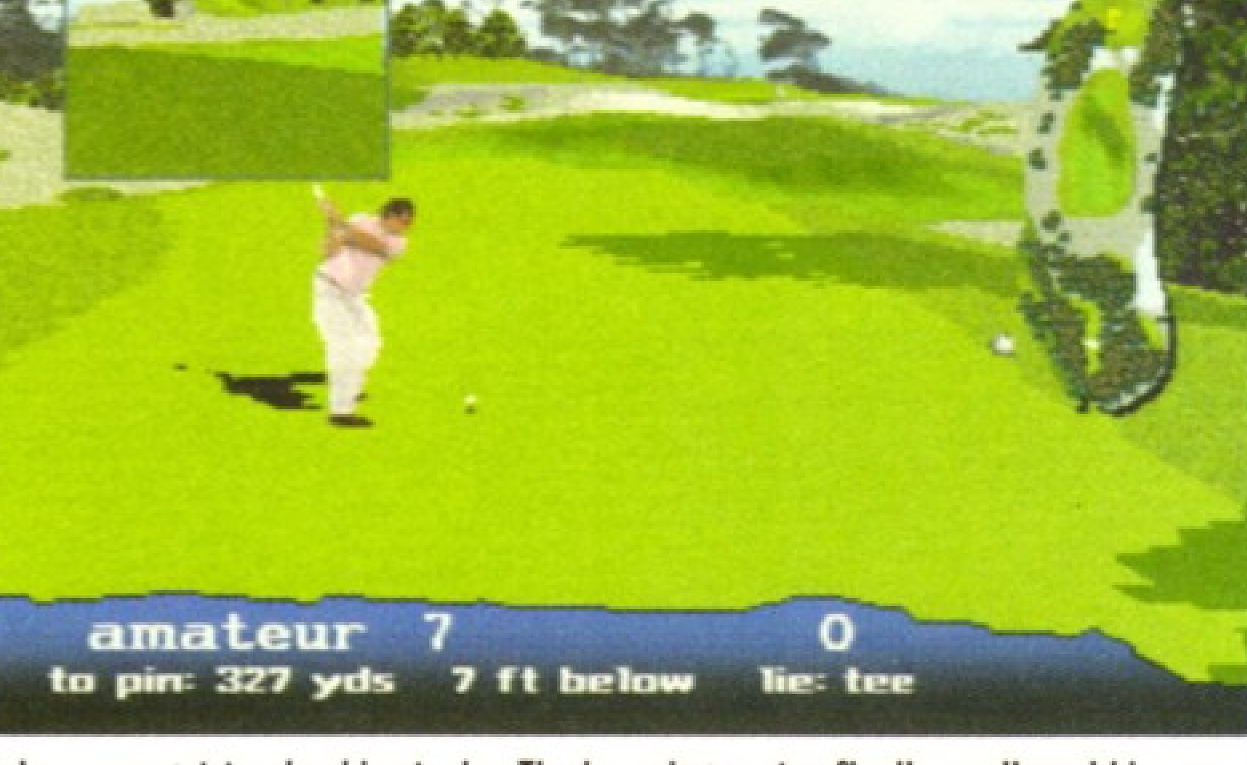




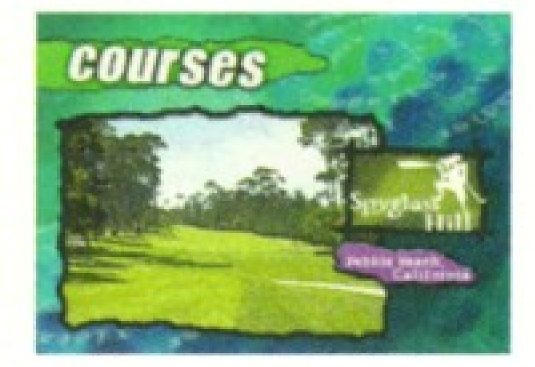


This shot from behind the trees is going to be far from easy.

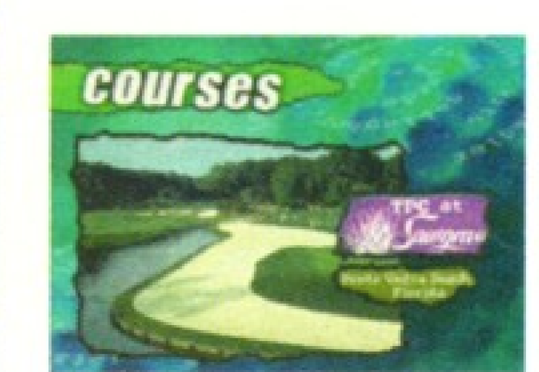




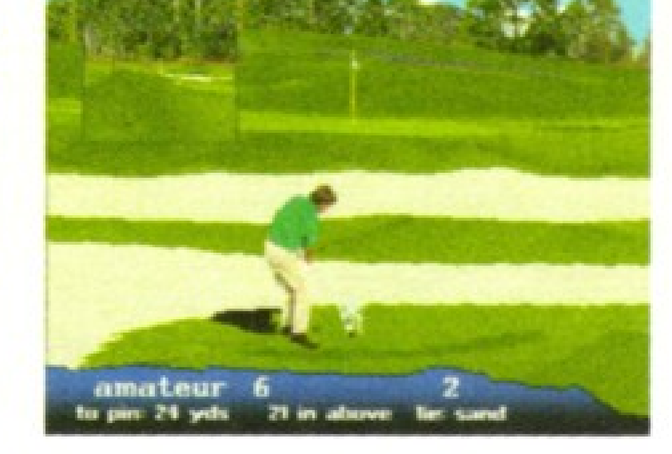
John never got to play his stroke. The hovering vortex finally swallowed him up.



This is one course...



This is another course...



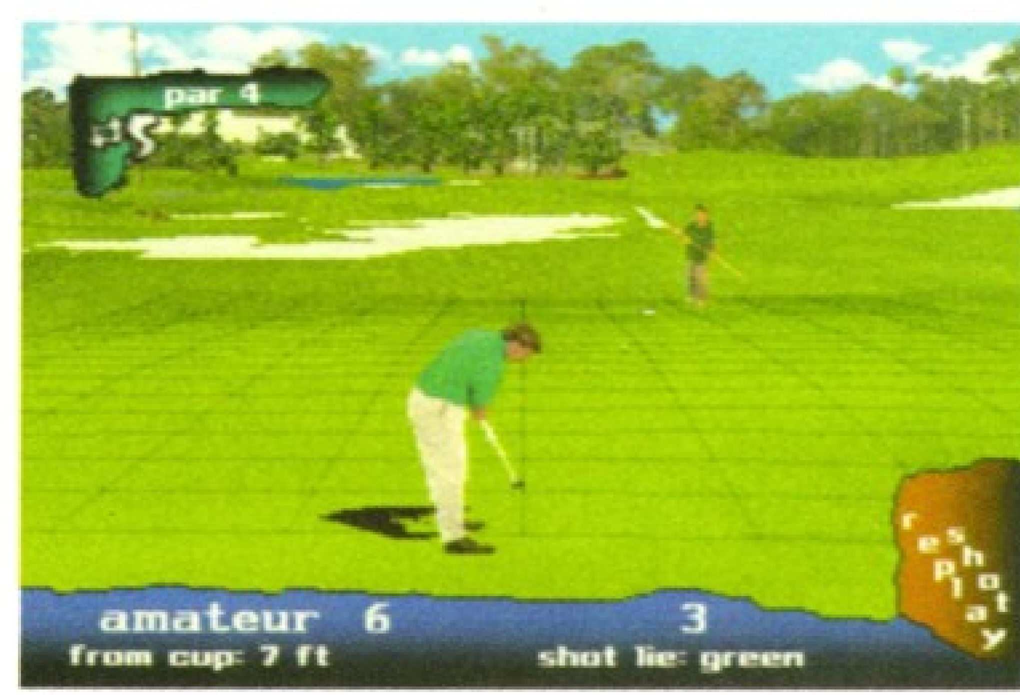




And here are lots of courses.



Edward was growing tired of being the lackey to that mouthy rich golfing toff. 'I'm going to break out' he kept telling himself, 'I'm going to go my own way. I've had enough of caddying'...



...he said. 'These toffs are gonna pay. One day I'll be where he is. I'll be the best golfer around and have that git caddy for me!'... But still young Edward raised the flag in cowardly defeat.

A decidedly lacklustre version of PGA Tour, especially disappointing given EA's excellent reputation in the sports sim genre. Bit of a shambling mockery of a travesty.

graphics	78
sound	80
playability	68
lastability	67
overall	68%



SEGA SATURN™ tips

The biggest tips this month are some incredible debug mode cheats for Guardian Heroes and Night Warriors. They let you access sections of code used by the programmers when developing the games, so that you can see how some of the game works. They're not of any real use to you, but are certainly intriguing...



GUARDIAN HEROES

To give yourself 99 continues for Hard mode, start a game on the Easy setting and get killed straight after the starting room. Instead of continuing choose to Give Up, and go to the options screen. Now set the difficulty to Hard and start a Story Mode again to have 99 continues!

You might have seen that there was an excellent debug mode cheat for the Japanese version of Guardian Heroes which doesn't work on the UK version of the game. Well, we've now got the same cheat for the official game! It's not easy to do, so keep trying until you get it working.
Firstly, go to the Options menu and highlight Exit. Now hold X+B+Z and press Down. Now, while you are highlighting Dip Switch press A. Now go into the Dip Switch option and you can now turn Debug Mode on!
Debug mode also turns on a load of other cheats, so that all 45 characters are available in multi-player mode, you can watch all the endings in Test Mode, you can select your start level in Story Mode, and you can power yourself up as much as you want.
Also, during a game, you can now press these buttons together when paused to activate more cheats:

Left Shift + Y + Right Shift	**Display collision boxes (repeat for 3D mode)**
Right Shift + Start	**Skip 1 level**
Right Shift + A + Start	**Skip 2 levels**
Right Shift + B + Start	**Skip 3 levels**
Right Shift + C + Start	**Skip 4 levels**
Left Shift + Right Shift + Start	**Go back 1 level**
Left Shift + Right Shift + A + Start	**Go back 2 levels**
Left Shift + Right Shift + B + start	**Go back 3 levels**
Left Shift + Right Shift + C + start	**Go back 4 levels**
X + Y + Z + Up	**Recover all life points**
X + Y + Z + Down	**Kill yourself**



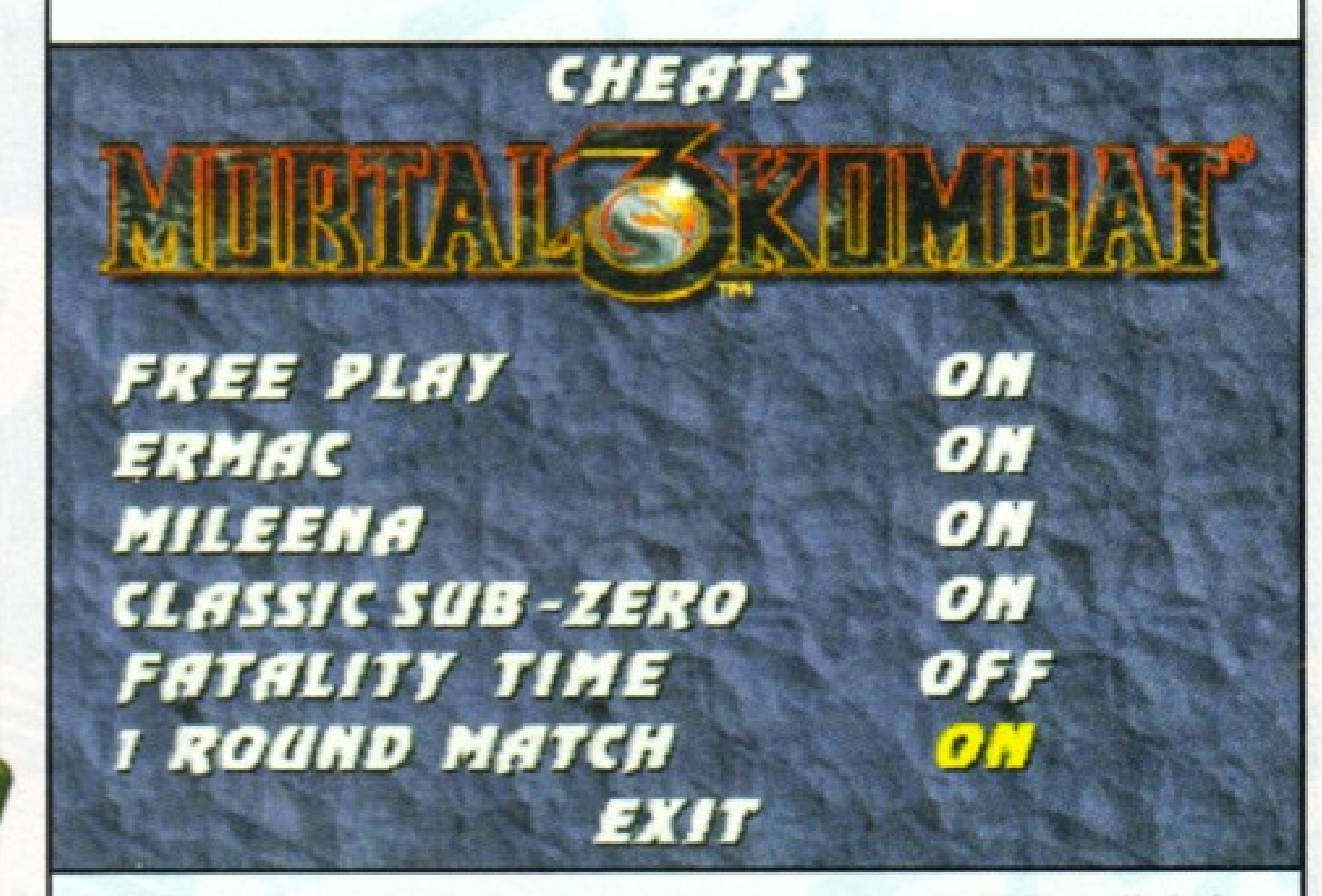




While the debug mode cheat will give you all 45 characters for multi-player mode, they will disappear when you turn the Saturn off.

ULTIMATE MORTAL KOMBAT 3

This cheat lets you access a hidden options menu with things like Infinite Fatality Time, and an option to get the hidden fighters from the start. On the title screen just press C, R, A, Z, Y, C, Y, R, A, X (Crazy Cyrax). Now go to the options cube and press Up to view a hidden side with "?" on it.



The best thing is, this cheat stops you having to enter the Ultimate Kodes!

STORY OF THOR 2

While it doesn't mention it anywhere in the game manual, there's a secret 2-player mode in Story of Thor 2! To call up a second Leon, play as usual and stand in an area with no enemies around. Now press Z to bring up the weapon select, hold L and X, then release them. Another shadow version of Leon will appear and he can be controlled with the second pad! Just repeat the cheat to get rid of him.

To bring back any of the bosses after you've beaten them, go to a spirit shrine and use Dytto to put out the two torches in the room. You'll hear a loud noise to let you know it's worked. Now just exit the room and go back in to get the boss!



WORLDWIDE SOCCER '97

Here are some of the special moves not listed in the instruction booklet.

Backheel	Backwards+B
Overhead flick	Forwards, Backwards, Forwards+B
Shimmy	Tap twice to either side of your player when dribbling
Light Chip	C, C
Looping Shot	A, C
One-two pass	Right Shift+B
Super Shot	Tap A once
Low Shot	A, A in the penalty area



Master these special moves and you'll be able to play like in the TV advert! On top of that, you can beat your friends!



MAGIC CARPET

This cheat lets you access a hidden cheat menu with a level select, among other things. Go to the options screen and play these sound effects in this order: 11, 31, 15, 5, 26, 22. You should now get the extra options. Once this code's been entered, play the game as usual and pause at any time, then press X to get all of the spells, Y to finish the level instantly, or Z to get lots of mana.



NHL POWERPLAY HOCKEY

To access the hidden Rad Army Team (with a 99 rating!), hold A+Y+C at any time that the screen is fading away to reveal either quick start or team select screen. You should now be able to move to the left of the Anaheim Ducks to reveal the new team!





The secret team is almost completely perfect, so if you lose now it's totally your fault! Don't mess it up.

NIGHT WARRIORS

This complex cheat lets you turn on the game's debug mode and play around with all sorts of weird options, just like in Guardian Heroes.

The first thing you need to do is set your Saturn's internal clock to the 24th of January 1998, then start the game as usual. Now enter then Appendix cheat as we've printed before (go to option mode, highlight Configuration, and press B, X, Down, A, Y).

Now enter this code to turn the debug mode on: X, X, Down, B, C. Once you've done that, reset the machine and start a game to enable more debug modes. Now when you're playing, just press one of these combinations:

Stop Timer	Down+R+B
Unlimited Supers	Down+R+C
Show Damage	Down+R+X
Stop Energy Loss	Down+R+A
Start Ending	Down+R+Z
Square Frame	Down+R+Y



You should see the collision boxes here!

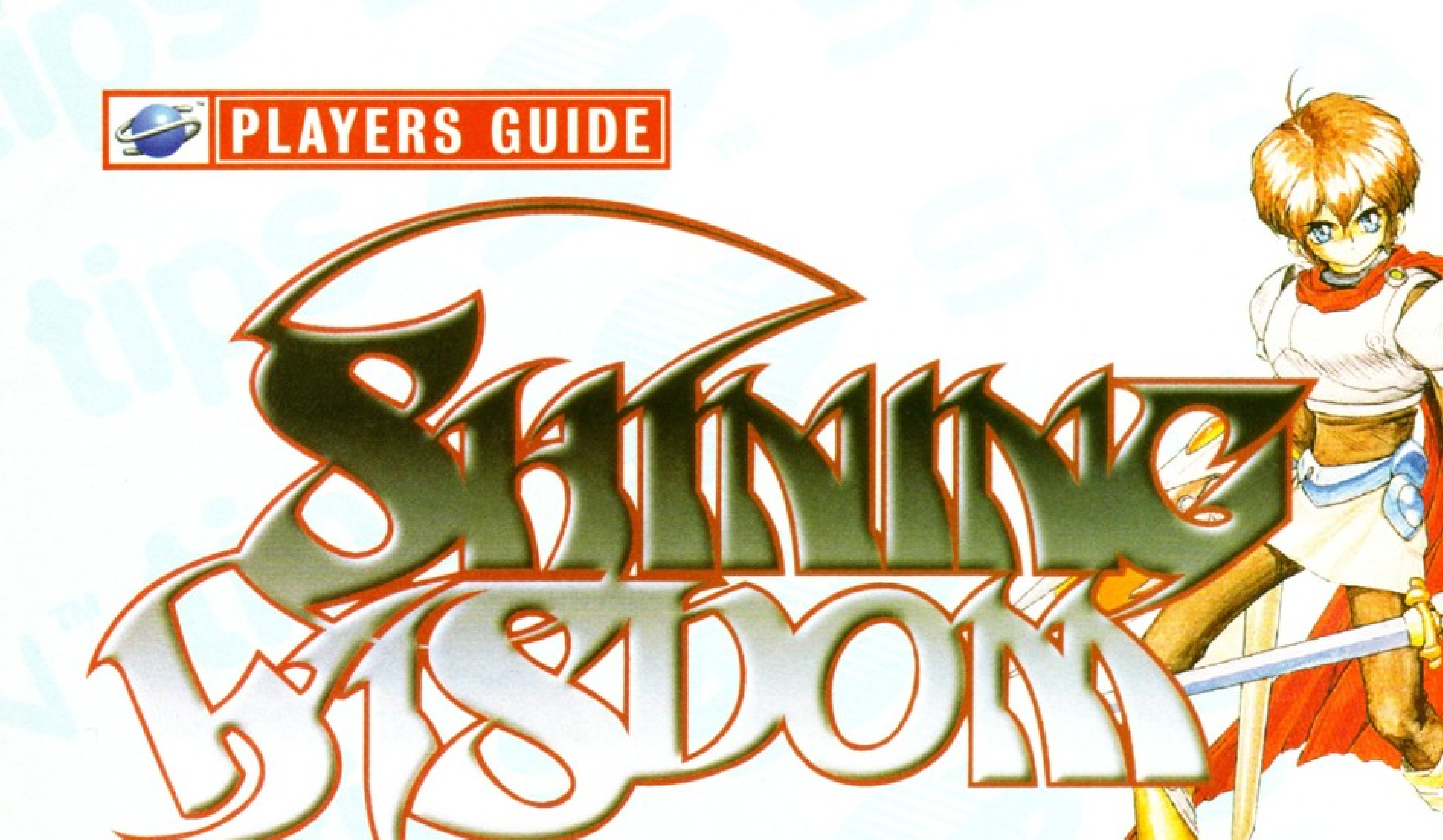




Debug mode lets you change everything!



Don't forget to change your Saturn's date.



Since we did Part 1 of a Shining Wisdom players guide back in issue 11 we've had plenty of phone calls from disgruntled readers asking what happened to Part 2. Unfortunately Sam was busy at work figuring it all out when suddenly she decided to swan off around the world. Instead, we've decided to offer a little bit of Q and A.

Q1: I"ve just started the game and I'm wandering about with no idea what to do. So what do I do?
A1: strabge as it may sound, simply go to bed. From the left entrance of the castle, start travelling up the screen until you're as far back as you can. Then simply go up the stairs, jump in the bedand take a nap.

● These are not an alternative kind of oven gloves, but Mole Claws which enable you to dig your way through to new areas.

Q2: I'm in Gudo Valley. I've got the slide shoes but don't know what to do with them.
A2: You want to head to the Mystic Woods situated in the North-West part of East Odegan. The slide shoes will enable you to get under hollow tree trunks and thus explore the Mystic Woods further.

Q3: Where are the Magic Hands?
A3: During you exploration of the Mystic Woods, you should come across a tree trunk that leads down South off of the screen. It's situated in the lower left part of the woods. It actually leads to a watery area where there are some very strange monsters. Remember the Library from the Castle? Well using the stone shoes will make the monsters flip. Then you can kick them around a bit. Also, when you get to the two monsters in a row, kick them up.

● It's the Stone shoes which are situated in the Royal Crypt. You'll find the Royal Crypt on the west part of the Castle. They come in useful in the Fire Labyrinth don't you know.

Q4: I talk to the trees, but they don't listen to me!
A4: Hmmm, what you need is either some mental advice or the Whisper Conch. IYou'll find it in the Gudo Valley and once you get the Magic Hands, you can complete the rest of this part of the game.Find the Fairy in Gudo Valley and she'll pass on the Whisper Conch. Equip it, and you're free to natter away.

Q5: Where is the Princess?
A5: The Princess (swan) is located in the Mystic Woods.You need to use the Whisper Conch to talk to one of the trees.It will then open a blocked passage to the North part of the woods letting you get to the boss and the Princess.

Q6: How do I get into the Sand Labyrinth? There are two bombs in the way.



And there they are, those elusive Slip shoes! You'll find them in the Gudo cave. Hoorah!

A6: What you want are the Hercules Gloves. After getting the Long Sword from the king, you need to go to his treasure room. The go back to the bottom floor of the Castle, and follow the carpet until you get to the staircase. You'll find the treasure room below.

Q7: How do I get to the treasure chest in the Sand Labyrinth that is surrounded by walls?
A7: Get to the floor above the treasure chest. Make sure that the switch that changes the sand to ice is selected to sand. On the floor above you'll see a part in the sand that will breakaway (right above where the treasure chest is on the floor below). Walk into the center of the breakaway part and wait to fall. When you do, you will end up right in front of the chest. Now you have the Mole Claw.

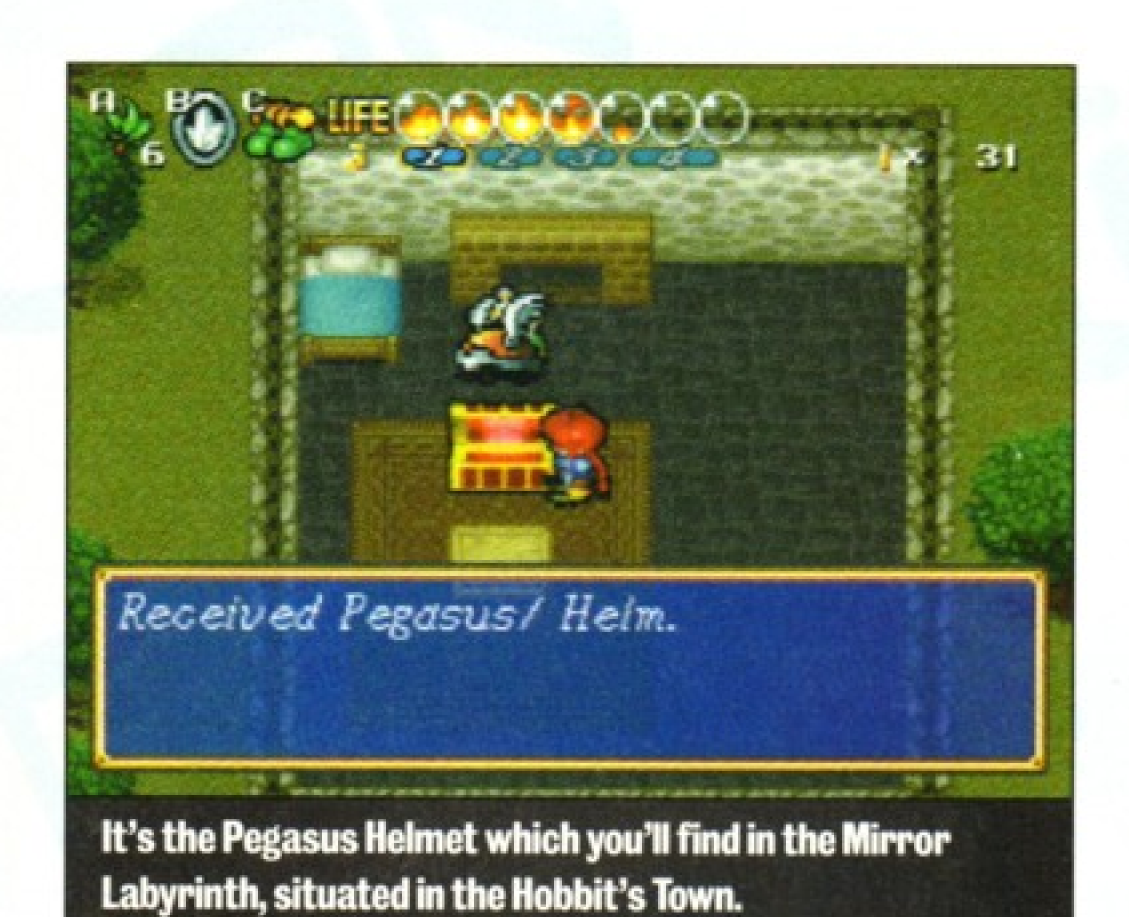
Q8: How do I beat the Sand Labyrinth?
A8: We get asked about this all the time.On the bottom floor of the labyrinth you'll reach a door with a face on it that won't open. The answer is on the top floor. You need to change the sand to ice when you get there. Go to the left room on the top floor and



Yep it's that ancient warrior legend, born in a time of heroes and dragons. It is of course, Steve.

change the sand to ice with the Magic Hands. Go up one room, and one room to the right and pick up an ice statue there using the Hercules Gloves. Now, without changing the ice back to sand, get back to the bottom floor of the dungeon (you can put down the statue BTW). Take the statue to the door with the face on it, and the door will open. Then do the boss and you're sorted!

Q9: After beating the Sand Labyrinth, the King tells me that I can go wherever I want. Is this true?
A9: Yes and no. While you can go everywhere, you can't really do much unless you do things in the correct order. Try the Ice Labyrinth next. It's located in West Odegan. In the process, you'll need to slide into a teleporter using the Slide Boots and the Shock Orb.



It's the Pegasus Helmet which you'll find in the Mirror Labyrinth, situated in the Hobbit's Town.

Q10: I've beaten the Sand and the Ice Labyrinth. What next?

A10: Your next goal is to beat the Jump Labyrinth. It's located in the North part of East Odegan. And there is a sign out front that tells you that it's dangerous.

Q11: Okay, I'm in the Jump Labyrinth but how do I beat it?

A11: First off, every single one of these hints are in both the Magic Guild and the Library. But now for the answers. The most important things to remember is that you can freeze the bombs with the Ice Orb (and the Stone Shoes). Freeze a bomb, and then take it to the face nearby. Wait for it to thaw, and then throw it. Also, when you get to the room with all of the sand in it, remember to dig everywhere, and try to go all directions in the sand. There is a roundabout way through the wall to get to the items. And finally, use the Magic Hands and the Shock Orb to throw spark balls into the moving blue rings by the water.

● This here is the Pegasus Helmet that you'll find in the Mirror Labyrinth. But how do you get there?

Q12: How do I beat the boss of the Fire Labyrinth?

A12: To put it simply, you need to freeze his flame shots with the Ice Orb and the Stone Shoes. Then pick up the frozen shots with the Hercules Gloves and throw them at him. It only takes two hits to beat him.

Q13: I can't get through the Wind Labyrinth because I can't get across the gaps.

A13: What you need is the Pegasus Helm which involves going to the Mirror Labyrinth.



In the Mirror Labyrinth, the idea is to reverse everything there. Closed mouths open, open eyes close.

Q14: And how do I get through the Mirror Labyrinth?

A14: There are a few things to note to beat the Mirror Labyrinth. First off is that there is a room just to the right from the position you start in where you can use the Magic Mirror. By doing so, you change the view of the dungeon around (left now goes left). It also changes the closed mouths to open, bomb spewing mouths (and vice-versa). And the closed eyes change to open eyes that you can bomb (and vice-versa). Just keep going back and forth between the two sides to finish the dungeon.

Q15: I'm having problems in the Light Labyrinth – the place where you get the Shining Sword – so what should I do?

A15: There are two tough parts in the Light Labyrinth. One is the door that has three buttons in front of it. You can't push all of them at once, but the Magic Hands and the Blast Orb can. The othertip we can give you is that the sand doors can be blown down (or nuked down) with the Blast Orb and the Stone Shoes.

Q16: So how about some hints to the Great Labyrinth?

A16: All we can really say is that you need to keep exploring. Once you get the keys, there are four key doors you can open by just walking into them. You need to beat all four bosses before you can take on Pazort. And that's your lot!

Shinning Wisdom features loads of items that you need to get hold of if you're to make progress in the game. Here's a run down of just what you need and just where to find it.

Sword: You start with it.
Long Sword: You get it from the king when you bring back the Princess.
Shining Sword: You get it in the Light Dungeon.
Magic Pjamas: It lets you sleep anywhere (but it takes about 15 seconds), restoring all of your life and your Life Stock (the LS circles in your inventory). You buy it for 1000 coins at a shop to the South East of the Sand Labyrinth (you'll need the Stone Shoes and the Ice Orb to freeze the water in front of shop entrance).
Stone Shoes: Inside the Royal Crypt (West part of the Castle).
Spring Shoes: Inside the Jump Labyrinth (Noth East part of East Odegan).
Mole Claw: Inside the Sand Labyrinth (South of the town).
Monkey Suit: In the Millennial Tree (North part of West Odegan).
Toydona USA: Under the bush (Blast Orb and anything) near the town.
Slip Shoes: In the Gudo Cave (North East part of East Odegan).
Magic Hands: In the Mystic Woods (North West part of East Odegan).
Hercules Gloves: In the treasure room in the castle.
Pegasus Helm: In the Mirror Labyrinth (in the Hobbit's Town on the lake).
Whisper Conch: In the Gudo Cave (North East part of East Odegan).
Magic Mirror: In the Fire Labyrinth (South part of West Odegan).
Empty Bottle: From a guy in the King's room in the Castle.

● The Magic mirror is to be found in the Fire Labyrinth which you'll see is situated in the south part of West Odegan.

Blessed Water: When you have the bottle, go back to the Hermit at the top of the Millennial Tree (North part of West Odegan).
Judo Suit: South West of the Water Labyrinth there is a tree you can burn. If you look to the West about three of your character steps (and one floor down) you can see an area to slide into. In there you'll find the Judo Suit.
Bounce Boots: After you have the four orbs (and if you have healed the plant in the Millennial Tree with the Blessed Water), the plant in the Tree will have grown. Up there is the Air Labyrinth. If you beat that, you get the Bounce Boots which let you jump really high!



And there it is! Dave's favourite item of clothing for parties – a bona fide Monkey suit!

Shield Orb: In the tree right in front of the Mystic Woods. (Mystic Woods are in the North West part of East Odegan).
Power Orb: In the right room of the Castle treasure room. You need to teleport (Slide Shoes and the Spark Orb) to get to it. And you actually need a few more items to get anywhere inside the dungeon (so you can't get it as soon as you get the Slide Shoes and the Spark Orb).
Dazzle Orb: It's in a bush South of Gudo Valley.
Dinky Orb: Talk to your Grandfather when you have the Toydona USA equipped. He'll take you to a track. If you get a good time you get the Dinky Orb.
Dyslex Orb: It's located near the Fire Labyrinth. Go to the Fire Labyrinth. When you get to the place where you need to jump across to continue (there is a sign telling you about the jump), go down South instead. At the end of the walkway you'll find the Dyslex Orb. And yes, it is completely useless.
Silver Bottles: One of the bottles the King will give to you, the other is in East Odegan. You need to slide into an area near Gudo Valley.



COIN-OPERATED

AT LAST! Street Fighter enters the third dimension! Ever since the appearance of Virtua Fighter in the arcades, gamers have been wondering "What if Street Fighter was rendered in the same style?". Here's where we find out.

The games genius behind Street Fighter 2 has teamed up with some of Capcom's finest games designers to bring the world's most popular fighting game series into the third dimension! After years of speculation and wonderment, we can finally see Ryu and Ken performing their traditional Fireballs and Dragon Punches - in full 3D!

Whereas the AM teams took a completely different direction to the gameplay when they devised Virtua Fighter, elite developers Arika are concentrating on making the overall fighting experience similar to the established Street Fighter, albeit with all the spectacular visuals and brilliant camera angles that distinguish the 3D fighting genre.

Having checked out a very early pre-production version of Street Fighter EX (as is its current title), we must admit to be very impressed with what the talented production team have achieved. The power of Street Fighter's outrageous techniques is increased still further with the move into 3D - just imagine Ryu's Hurricane Kick or Chun Li's Spinning Bird Kick in full 3D!

The pictures dotted around these six Coin-Operated pages should give you some idea of what Arika have achieved with Street Fighter EX. The looks are being improved upon as we speak, but even now, seeing these incredible moves in full 3D is an experience that all SF fans MUST try out for themselves.

INTRODUCING THE GUARD BREAK!

3D fighting games such as Tekken (and the VF1 and VF2 to lesser degrees) suffered in gameplay terms due to large amounts of blocking taking place. Arika have realised that this lessens the fun of the game and have thus introduced Guard Break techniques in Street Fighter EX.

Like the Alpha Counters in Street Fighter Alpha, these are specialised techniques that require at least one block of Super Combo energy to successfully perform.

Once it hits home on your opponent, they are momentarily staggered, allowing you to gain the initiative and attack your foe without worrying about his guard.

THE SUPER COMBOS ARE BACK!

First appearing in Super Street Fighter 2 Turbo, we can reveal that Super Combos are most definitely scheduled to appear in 3D! The familiar Super Combo gauge appears on-screen and works much like it does in SFA. However, Arika tell us that there's a new Super Combo derived feature in Street Fighter EX. What it is we can't say. However, we will keep you informed.

HOW DO I CONTROL IT?

The controls are much the same as they are in the Street Fighter 2 and Alpha games.

Movement and blocking are achieved using an eight directional joystick whilst attacks come in the form of punches and kicks of three different strengths. So the lever plus six button control affair synonymous with Street Fighter is just as valid in the new 3D game! There may have been a temptation to move to the more traditional 3D fighting game controls but Capcom are having none of it - and rightly so!

CHARACTER PROFILES

At this stage in development, we can reveal that there are eight controllable characters in the street fighting roster. Rather than just use a bunch of existing Street Fighters or pulling other characters from Capcom's rich games history (as in the Alpha games), developers

Capcom have successfully married the spectacular 3D angles and movement of the Virtua Fighter series with the rampant playability of the award-winning Street Fighter 2D games.
For Street FIghter EX, it's quite interesting to note that Capcom have opted for Chun Li's original look and sure-killing techniques (below), emphasising her sheer speed and exceptional agility. We can't wait to see the final game!









Like Capcom's other notable 3D fighting game, Star Gladiator, Street Fighter EX features some visually superlative "plasma" effects as you can see on the screenshots surrounding this caption.
It's definitely a case of new character versus old in these pictures. Ken performs his trademark Hadoken fireball technique on SkulloMania (above) whilst Zangief reels from an attack from a new challenger (left).

Arika have chosen four of the most popular characters from Street Fighter 2 and created four new ones specifically for this exciting new 3D game! Expect to see fuller character descriptions and a gripping new Street Fighter storyline appearing soon!

RYU - "I'll stake everything on my fists!"
The fighting expert who still aims for the top.

KEN - "I'll show you my true potential!"
Ryu's eternal rival.

CHUN LI - "These legs won't be silent!"
The Interpol Drug Investigation Agent.

ZANGIEF - "The Red Cyclone is Indestructible!"
The strongest wrestler in Russia.

SKULLOMANIA - "I'm the defender of world justice!"
The superhuman fighting-mania hero.

PULLUM PURNA - "Challenging me to a fight is 1,000 years too soon!"
An Arabian multi-millionaire's granddaughter.

DOCTRINE DARK- "If you don't want to die, don't fight with me!"
A professional killer from a special assassination squad.

HOKUTO - "I will scatter you like the cherry blossom!"
Uses Kobujutsu that is descended from the Bushin fighting style.





Yet more action from the potentially brilliant Street Fighter EX! The unfinished player select screen (top) features rendered head shots of the Street Fighters plus the promise of two more characters. On the shot directly above, the power of Zangief is clearly evident - as Ryu's midriff pays the price!

THE AKIRA INTERVIEW

SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE's Japan Editor Warren Harrod recently paid a visit to Arika's headquarters in Japan. After playing the game for a while and beholding the special moves of each character, he sat down and questioned Mr Ichiro Mihara - the Vice President of Arika!

SSM In the beginning we were calling it Street Fighter 3D. What's this game's real name?
Ichiro Mihara For the Japanese version its formal name is Street Fighter EX (pronounced E - X). For the foreign versions we aren't sure what it's going to be called. However, for the moment it's basically Street Fighter EX (SF EX).

SSM Can you please tell us a little about the Street Fighter EX team?
IM The main planner who's supervising everybody is Arika Nishitani, the creator of Street Fighter 2. In general, he's in charge of development. After that, Junichi Ono is working on the planning also. It's felt that he was the founder of the DarkStalkers and Night Warriors series as he was its main planner. Having these two, the originators of the SF2 and the Vampire series, we shouldn't have any problems planning-wise. They're the best planners in this field. Fundamentally, we've gathered an excellent staff of software creators for this development.

SSM What were your first thoughts when you began work on Street Fighter EX?
IM We decided that the game would use some kind of 3D experience. For the expression of this 3D effect, we're using 3D graphics for its visual appearance but the content of the game hasn't really been changed from the 2D animated fighting version. With regards to the 3D, the 3D effect makes the fight interesting but with the way you fight in the traditional Street Fighter, just because it becomes 3D doesn't mean that it has to use depth or axis rotation. Although its presentation is in 3D, the fighting method is still the same as the 2D Street Fighter used up to now. Using Street Fighter Alpha 2 as the base we took the best parts of it as the outline to form its shape.

SSM From the viewpoint of design, what did you start on first?
IM First of all we started from the idea of whether it really was possible to create a 2D fighting game in 3D. One of the main differences between 2D and 3D is the fighting method. We weren't sure whether the Lightning Kick, the Hurricane Kick or the Cancel were possible. These elements are in the 2D version but when it became 3D these portions might of had to disappear. We started from this area of whether or not this 3D motion was possible at all. From this concept, development steadily progressed, trying to do it in different ways and before we knew it the Dragon Punch, the Hurricane Kick and even the Upper Cancel were all done. In this way we continued to progress.

SSM What problems do you have with the interaction of the characters now that they have become 3D?
IM With a 2D game the interaction is just the same as it looks on the screen. If the characters "touch", there's a hit. However, when a game becomes 3D then, as you'd expect, if you rotate the picture around then looking from the side it appears to hit, but if you look from above it doesn't hit. That's how you take hits in 3D. However, simply put, 3D fighting games up to now have all been using this same kind of 3D collision detection routines. It goes without saying that you can't just keep on using the same one method. In general ARIKA has an original way of thinking and although we haven't given it a name yet, we've developed an original interaction system. In general, all the hits are represented in 3D but the collisions are handled in a 2D way, like the Street Fighter series method used up to now. It's a little newer way of taking hits. Very early on in development we were thinking what we should do about this. Then, we had a sudden flash of inspiration, "Hey, if we do it like this it might just work!". Then just like that it became our system.

SSM Is it just the characters that can interact? What about the backgrounds?
IM In the centre of the stage the characters fight. In practice the Computer Graphic field is then created around them and a 360 degree camera is placed in the middle. In this way it's not possible for them to interact. The scenery is just like a picture that scrolls around the characters in the background.

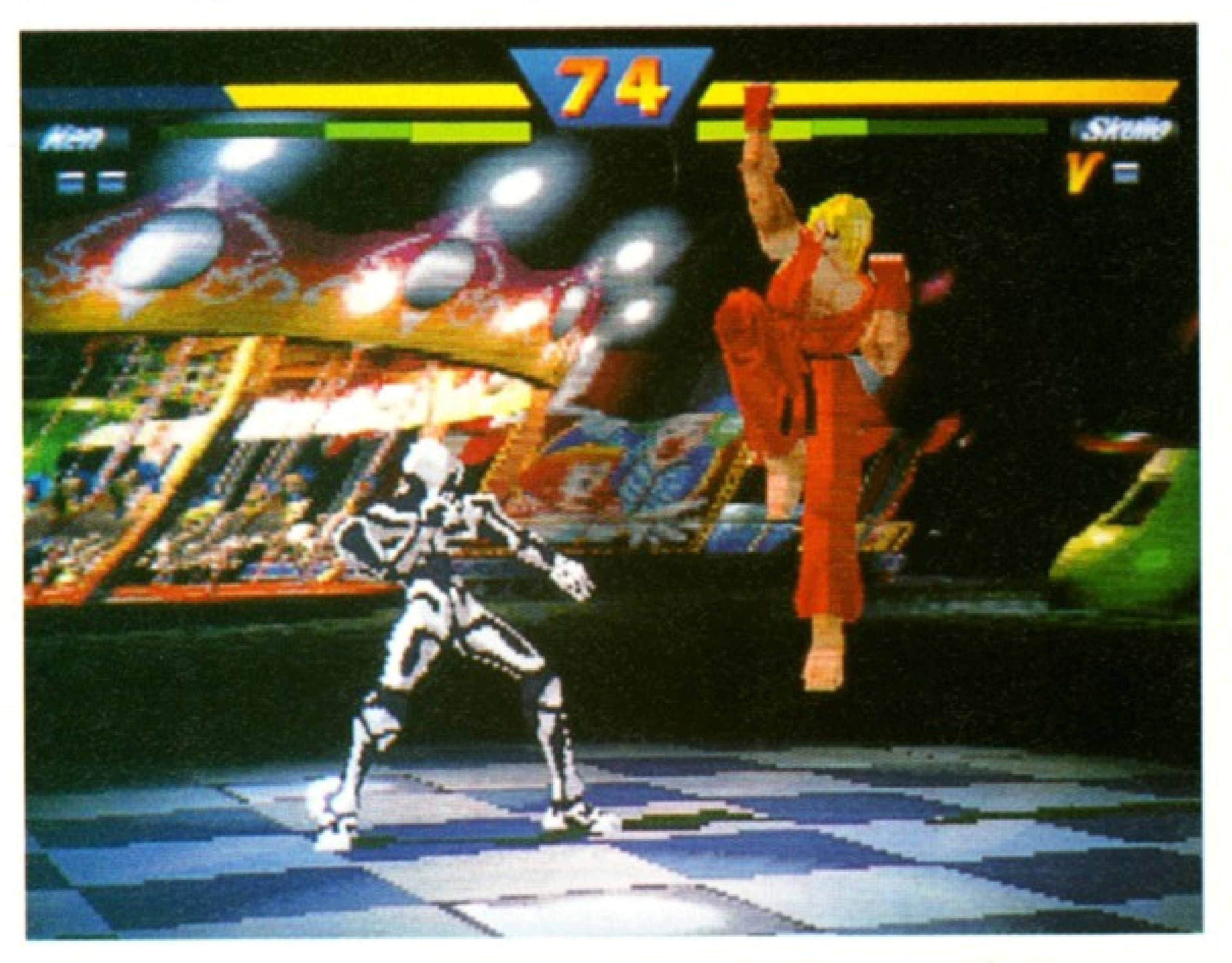
SSM Which of the characters was the most difficult character to convert?
IM Which character was the most difficult? Which character was the easiest? It was nothing like that at all. They were all difficult. It certainly wasn't the case of any character being easier than another.

SSM Compared to other games the speed of Street Fighter is very fast. How are you overcoming the problem of converting this to 3D?
IM This is a similar problem. At the moment we're all doing as much as possible but we'll probably be battling with this right up to the very end. We're devoting ourselves to trying again and again, fine-tuning SF EX to get it perfect. We want to get it as good as possible in order to satisfy all the users.

SSM In order to get this speed is the hardware a problem?

>>

Although based on real fighting arts, maybe Street Fighter has retained its popularity through the years thanks to the outrageous nature of the special moves in the game. For developers Arika the challenge was to make these moves look exceptional in three dimensions. This has posed some problems since 3D games often rely on super-realism to make their mark. Still, as you can see from Ken's Dragon Punch (below), Arika appear to have succeeded brilliantly!







Capcom's first Street Fighting foray into the world of the 3D fighting game looks like being most special indeed. The familiarity of the four SF2 characters is very good indeed, but who knows how the new fighters control?

>> **IM** To that extent it's not a problem. After all it is running at a 1/60 frame rate so this area of power isn't a problem at all. Whether you can get the visuals looking good or not is a problem but in relation to this speed problem it's not causing us that much difficulty.

SSM In Street Fighter 2 there are some spectacular moves. What difficulties do you have in representing these to Street Fighter EX?

IM It's the motion isn't it? After all if the Dragon Punch isn't a Dragon Punch it's no good. If the Fireball isn't a Fireball it's no good. The really frightful one is the Hurricane Kick. With 2D animation it might look spectacular but when you think about it in 3D, the character spinning around with their legs stuck out is only movement. It is often said that if it was done in polygons, it would be really cool but if we don't get it just right, it's no good at all. The main point is that the 3D image has to look good but if it's come from 2D animation, the possibility that it'll come out wrong is there. Thus, the area where we have to put in the most work is at the time of converting the techniques. We have put a lot effort into making sure that the users are satisfied so they won't play SF EX and say "Eh, this isn't a Dragon Punch!". On the other hand, there are various new techniques as well. For example, Chun Li has a new sure killing technique. Basically, this time she doesn't have the 'fireball' which she gained from SF Turbo onwards. The fact that she doesn't have it isn't because of anything technical. Rather, Chun Li's original concept was for her to use agility, leaping about and striking out etcetera. With the use of the fireball her fighting style changed so we've only returned back to her original concept. At the time we returned we thought why not create a new sure killing technique that was more in tune with this kind of character? And while we were at it we created some other new fighting techniques as well. On top of that, we looked at other techniques and improved or modified them also. We'd like to think that the users will try to play with the new techniques and say "Hey! This is smart!", "This one's the best!" preferring the new ones over the old ones. We've modified the techniques for this reason.

SSM Have you been able to include Chun Li's "Spinning Bird Kick"?

IM Yes, now you can do it. It was incredibly difficult. but at the moment you can actually do it. It's still experimental so it doesn't feel just quite right yet but it looks very similar. This time we didn't give much thought to Chun Li's Spinning Bird Kick. It isn't actually used that much during the fight but it is one of Chun Li's most representative fighting techniques isn't it. Indeed, it disappeared from SF Alpha onwards but we wanted to include it anyway. At the moment it's been taken directly from the 2D so, as you'd expect, it's a little slow. However, with a little more work on it we can get it right.

SSM When you convert the 2D to the 3D does the game balance sometimes suffer?

IM If the balance does go bad, we correct it to get it right. That's the way we have to consider this problem. If we don't, the users won't be satisfied. No matter how cool the Dragon Punch may be if you had to do it with two hands it wouldn't be a Dragon Punch at all. We'll certainly ensure that this kind of thing is preserved properly. We intend to do it so that everyone who plays it will think that it's a real Dragon Punch etcetera.

SSM A little while ago Street Fighter EX appeared at the Jamma Show. Could you tell us a little about the reaction to it from the users and press?

IM Only their impressions to the look of the game screen weren't very good. "Eh! Street Fighter's become some sort of 3D but it's awfully square looking." Visually speaking, if you look at a photo in a magazine or even just watch a video of it, it's said that the impression of SF EX isn't very good. However, if they have a go and play it, there's a complete change. "Brilliant!" "It's really good!". From talking to those operators that I know I've got the impression that they're all really looking forward to it. Certainly, looking at it and playing it are completely different. We're saying please play it. If you do, you'll see what SF EX





Both Ryu and Ken are present in the new Street Fighter EX. Examples of the former's staple techniques are shown in these pictures. The ubiquitous Dragon Punch (left) and the power of the fireball are in full effect (below).



The old Street Fighters' sure killing techniques seem to have been perfectly reproduced in stunning 3D. Witness Zangief's double lariat (above). Hopefully more special moves will be included in the final game.



really is like.

SSM How do you get feedback from the users?
IM At the Jamma Show we used a questionnaire. We also ask the opinions of the journalists and publicity staff who visit us to play SF EX. After that, the biggest source of feedback is from the company staff. As you'd expect they love SF2 so even though they're company staff they can still have strong criticisms etc. Some of the CAPCOM staff also visit us and tell us their impressions. Soon we'll be having a location test so at that time we'll be handing out questionnaires to the players.

SSM According to a press report last month SF EX was 17% complete. Was that true?
IM That was around August 30th when it was published. At that time is was around 17% complete. At the Jamma Show on September 14th it was around 20-25% complete. Were planning to do a location test shortly. At that time it'll be around 25-30% complete. For us, the development percentage at this stage is still very low. After all, even after the game's outline is complete the fine-tuning and adjustment process is very long. If the adjustment is less than half-done, even if the main game system is finished, it's not really complete at all.

SSM Didn't you think that at around 20% complete it was a little too early to unveil SF EX to the general public?
IM The usual way to think about development at 20%, for example, is in the case of let's say a car that has no body, just an engine, wheels and a steering wheel. For sure, it can be moved but it couldn't be driven on the road. There's not even a roof, it's dangerous. A 20% state is generally thought of as being at the very lowest level. But, a level of 20% as considered by us is only the minimum necessary level for it to be played by the users. In this way everyone can be interested in seeing how the remaining 80% turns out. Anything could happen! In reality, a large proportion of the game's framework is pretty much complete at the moment. From here on, in order to make it more interesting, we'll be refining the system and including new techniques etc. This is the 80%. Therefore, to presuppose that a 20% SF EX is similar to a car's construction doesn't hold true.

SSM Are you planning to make announcements on the SF EX status on a regular basis?
IM For a while we're going to keep ourselves out of sight. We've made this announcement now but we're going to hide for the next month or so and concentrate on development. The next thing for us will be the location test. After that, in around a month we'll be able to talk about the responses it.

SSM The Japanese press often like to write frequent reports about games don't they?
IM Yes, some of the writers are incredibly detailed in their reports on SF EX. Their questions can sometimes be really specific, such as the finer details of certain character's chained combinations. But really, it's far too soon for that. At only around 20% complete we'd like people to write about SF EX in little more general terms.

SSM In Japan Street Fighter 2 is very popular. Does the team feel under any pressure because of this?
IM Yes, but not because it's related to SF2. Whatever game we create we want it to be successful. For any new company the pressure not to fail in it's first venture is there but it's not because it has anything to do with SF2. On the other hand if there wasn't any pressure there'd be no incentive to do the best you can. That would be equally bad. Really, we're not under that much pressure. We're just working hard to create a game that everyone can enjoy playing.

SSM For a completely new game the users probably wouldn't be bothered by certain minor aspects of any particular character. However, for Street Fighter 2 every user has their own image of how that character should look in 3D. Is this a problem?
IM All the development staff here think exactly the same. Everyone likes SF2 so that's why they're doing it. Creating it themselves they understand the feeling >>





Full-on rendered head shots are used both on the player select and fight match-up screens (left). Zangief in 3D eh? Who'd have ever thought it? And what's the story with these new characters any way?



Street Fighter EX appears to have given the established characters some new moves. Have you ever seen Ken performing a kick like this before (above)? The tables turn in the picture (right) where Ken is on the receiving end of what looks suspiciously like Guile's or Charlie's somersault kick. Who knows what other techniques the new character use in this latest version of the Street Fighter legend?



>> of "Ah! That's different!". Therefore if they can somehow satisfy themselves, they should be able to win the approval of the users also. That's a safe method of doing it. As you'd expect with this development there are probably several areas where we haven't got much of a choice in what we can do. For those areas, as far as possible, we'll just leave them aside. In regard to SF2 the staff also have their own prejudices just like the users. We may be development staff but as SF2 players, even now, we still go down to the arcades to play. Those areas which concern the users are the same areas which we are also concerned about. The meaning of which is please trust us.

SSM How much more advanced are the Street Fighter EX graphics over Star Gladiator?

IM You can't really make comparisons to Star Gladiator (SG) unconditionally. SG runs at a 1/30 frame rate, while SF EX, at the moment, runs at a 1/60 frame rate. If we consider this difference then a 1/30 game is able to devote more emphasis to the visual graphics as its management processing is effectively halved. On the other hand, we are devoting more importance to the character of the game. The concepts behind the development of SF EX and SG are so different that you can't make unqualified comparisons.

SSM Are you receiving any assistance from the Star Gladiator team?

IM No, we aren't. In specific terms, it's a different development line. In addition, technically, it's completely different. The know-how we're using for this 2D/3D fighting game has no relation to SG. Fundamentally, ARIKA is not a subsidiary company of CAPCOM. Its capital and investment are completely separate. ARIKA was founded in November last year as an independent company. For a month after that we did research and then three months after that we started. We've still got the experience we gained at CAPCOM but technically there's no relation between us. We're not a branch office, we're making our own games by ourselves. As friends and people we know, then of course we still have communication. However, as separate companies, then in terms of technology we don't exchange routines or ideas. They're completely different. Some people may be under the impression that as we came from CAPCOM, there's some sort of link between us but in reality it's a different team making a different game. The concept is new and the know-how is new.

SSM At the moment what difficulties are you confronted with?

IM I suppose it's improving the quality of the visuals. From a hardware perspective if the hardware was great, naturally we could do super visual effects. Leaving aside the hardware, our excellent staff could create very beautiful graphics but of course all hardware has it's limitations. At the moment visuals are our number one problem.

SSM It's common for programmers to use a lot of polygons in the faces of women to keep them beautiful. Are you paying any particular attention to the women in SF EX?

IM For example, like using gouraud shading to make their thighs smoother etcetera. <laugh> We're trying to. At the moment we are really working hard on this area but as I said earlier, improving the visuals is a tough area. Of course we want the women to be very cute so as far as it is possible we're trying to. All our staff are excellent so the female characters certainly won't be poorly done.

SSM How did you select your Street Fighter EX characters from all the characters in the Street Fighter series?

IM There's really quite a simple reason. Well, of course Ryu and Ken are essential so we took them. Chun Li is also essential so we took her as well. These three are essential. At the moment, although personally I can't say for sure, were basically announcing eight characters at the moment but whether that will increase to nine or ten I don't know. I'm saying that until the very end there's always the chance that another Street Fighter character may appear as a hidden character or maybe we'll create another original character. We haven't considered at all yet but, maybe in a week or 10 days time, there's certainly the possi-









As well as including new Guard Break techniques to improve the rhythm of the fight, Street Fighter EX also includes some Super Combo action, as has been the case in the 2D SF games since the release of Super Street Fighter 2 Turbo. You get some groovy special effects when a Super is initiated (above). Also, prepare for some graphical brilliance in the close-up shots at the end of each bout (left).

bility that we may want to include another character. However, for the present there are eight characters, four original and four Street Fighter. Certainly, Ryu, Ken and Chun Li are pretty much the ones you'd expect to be there. That's three of them. As for Zangief he's in too. It's been decided to announce these four characters at this stage but there's still the chance that another Street Fighter may appear. Considering the game balance we've ended up with these four. After that we chose the new characters. After all, if you consider that SF EX is a different sequel, obviously we can't include only Street Fighter characters, so it can't be helped that some characters will have to be left out but we've chosen the SF EX characters naturally.

SSM Can you tell us a little about the design process for the new characters?
IM I wasn't in charge of the design process but basically we wanted the new characters to compare favourably to the Street Fighter characters and yet have a slightly different nature to them. We felt we wanted to try putting in characters that had a way to them that hasn't appeared in the Street Fighter series up to now.

SSM Have you already decided on how the new characters will fit into the story of the Street Fighter series?
IM We haven't decided on any kind of official story yet. At the end we'll consider it in outline and then formally discuss it with CAPCOM, but at this stage we haven't really thought about this area that much. There's the possibility that the characters' story lines might become entangled. For example, Hokuto uses "Kobujutsu" but that kind of samurai style (called Bushin style) often appears in CAPCOM games. Guy from the SF Alpha series and the Final Fight series also uses the Bushin style. There's a chance that this area, story-wise, might become mixed up. There is a plan but we haven't considered at all yet. Of course, CAPCOM also have their own ideas which they are considering.

SSM Have you considered any kind of game modes for Street Fighter EX?
IM Fundamentally, Street Fighter 2 is a one-on-one fighting game. The emphasis is on confronting your opponent and seeing who is the strongest by pitting your skills against theirs. Various ideas have been considered but it's still too early. This kind of consideration is done when the game is around 95% complete. The game is still in the punch and be punched preparation stage. Things like Red Earth's Story Mode or Street Fighter Alpha's Dramatic Battle are far too early for consideration. That's done after the game is finished.

SSM At the moment what's the feeling amongst the team?
IM Everything they can do they're doing. What they haven't tried to do before they don't know about but everything they've done up to know they understand. It's pretty much like the start of an adventure. "What shall we do?" - "Temporarily let's try it like this" - "Ah! It worked. Well, what about this then?". Like this, it's fairly much a state of trial and error. Everyone, individually, has confidence in themselves and they all giving it their all to the best of their ability. This means it's in good shape. There are parts that were rejected so they made them better, even parts that were failures but it's a challenge for them and so their spirits are high.

PERFECT

SSM Which part of Street Fighter EX are you the most proud of? What is your thinking behind this?
IM Ah, that's a difficult question, but probably that when you play the game, whether you win or lose it still has the feeling of enjoyment because it was interesting. Even if it's regrettable to lose the fight, the game is still enjoyable. I've got pride in creating that kind of game. I'm a stickler for the creation of this so I've got confidence in SF EX.

SSM Do you have any message for your new fans in England?
IM To all those those users who enjoyed playing Street Fighter 2 I hope you enjoy playing with SF EX also. For those users, we're working as hard as we can. Please play it. We like you all.

OUT NOW

TOMB RAIDER
BY: CORE, PRICE: £49.99, RATING: 92%

GAME OF THE MONTH SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE

When Core Design put their all into a game, you know that you're in for something special. Such is the case with Tomb Raider, the huge exploration adventure game with hodloads of action elements added into the mix.

From just about every perspective, the game is a winner. Core have successfully created one of the most lush, detailed 3D environments ever beheld in a videogame (just behind NiGHTS, but more interactive). Despite the detail-laden texture maps, the frame rate is pretty good and the overall impression is of an incredibly good-looking game.

Adding to the good impressions is the antics of the main character herself. Lara Croft must be one of the most versatile creations seen in a videogames and her activities are all portrayed with some stunning animation. The sheer range of her abilities takes plenty of time to get the measure of, and the same goes for



the innovative shooting system.

Emphasising the puzzling adventure aspect over the action, Tomb Raider is a pretty laid back type of game. It kind of reminds me of Prince of Persia but in 3D with far more to do. Just about its only drawback is, like in Prince of Persia, there's a noticeable "lag time" between entering a command and having Lara do it on-screen. It can get infuriatingly frustrating if you haven't got the



patience for it.

Still, this is the only drawback on what is easily the best game released this month. Check it out.

EARTHWORM JIM
BY: VIRGIN, PRICE: £39.99, RATING: 72%

Shiny Productions came to the fore on the Megadrive with the release of the brilliant Earthworm Jim - a cartoon platformer that took animation to new levels of excellence. This was bettered only by (ready yourself for a surprise) Earthworm Jim 2, which took the basic format and added to it with a number of excellent little sub-games.

Unfortunately, what was something of an essential purchase on the Megadrive falls far short with the lofty standards set by the Sega Saturn. It's difficult to pinpoint exactly what it is about Earthworm Jim 2 which is so wrong, because it's just as addictive and amusing as it was on the Megadrive. It's also in a class of



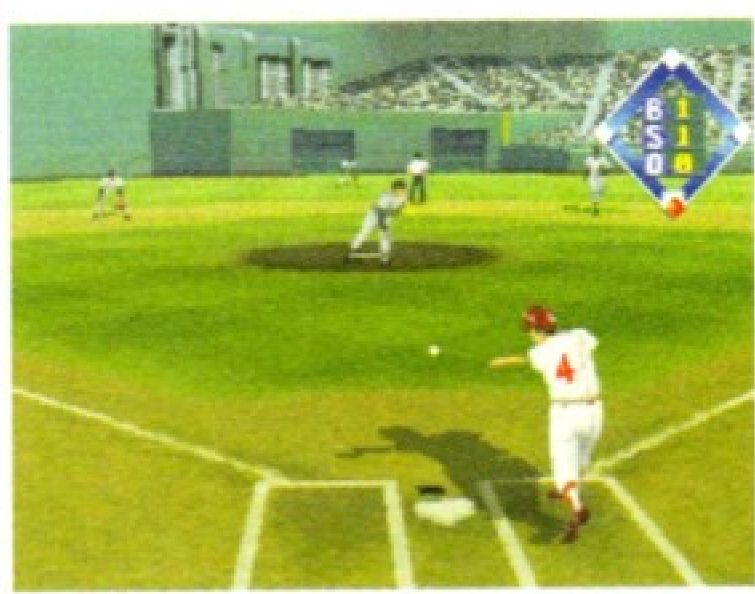
its own, simply because the whole concept of a 2D platform game seems to have evaded the vast majority of Saturn developers out there.

When push comes to shove, the problem must be that games like this just don't have the necessary sophistication and "wow" factor to succeed on the 32-bit format. What was a great 16-bit game doesn't necessarily cut the mustard on the Saturn.

WORLD SERIES BASEBALL 2
BY: SEGA, PRICE: £39.99, RATING: 87%

If there's one thing that can be guaranteed when it comes to baseball games, it's this: in concept, if not execution, they're all the bloody same! World Series Baseball 2 follows the same basic format as just about every other example of the genre. There's the same viewpoint behind the batter, the same switch to a big field view when the ball is hit and pretty much the same control method. Now that we're on the 32-bit systems though, everything is done with textured polygons to make the whole package that much more lovely and realistic.

And indeed, its WSB2's loveliness and realism that actually makes this worth checking it... if you're into base-



ball games. Obviously the programmers have really put themselves out in making what is probably the best baseball game ever. Just about every conceivable option is included, the graphics are just about as ace as they're going to get and the whole thing is extremely professional.

In fact, the only thing not in its favour is the fact that it's a baseball game and however much you like the sport, you just can't avoid the fact that the sport itself is a pretty limited affair. Still, if you're after a game of this sort (and it is rather good in two-player mode), you can't got far wrong with this particular example.

ACTUA GOLF
BY: GREMLIN, PRICE: £44.99 RATING: 90%

The quality of sports simulations was one of the main reasons why the Megadrive trounced the Super NES in terms of sales. Although the quality of software has been somewhat hit-and-miss when it comes to sports sims on Saturn, there have been one or two truly exceptional sporting releases on the new Sega machine in the last couple of months. The first was Sega WorldWide Soccer. The second is this, Actua Golf.

Gremlin are pretty smart cookies and what they have done with this



particular title is most cunning indeed. Just about everyone knows that PGA Tour Golf is the best-playing example of the genre, yes? Well what the Sheffield-based publisher has done is to take the basic PGA gameplay, spruce it up a bit and introduce some absolutely stunning 32-bit graphics. It's as simple as that really.

In terms of golfing simulations, this is by far and away the best thing you can get for the Saturn. The gameplay is bang on, the visuals are superb and the atmosphere (aided by the Peter Allis commentary) can't be beaten. If you're in the market for a golf game, this is the greatest. Period.

IMPACT RACING
BY: JVC, PRICE: £39.99, RATING: 85%

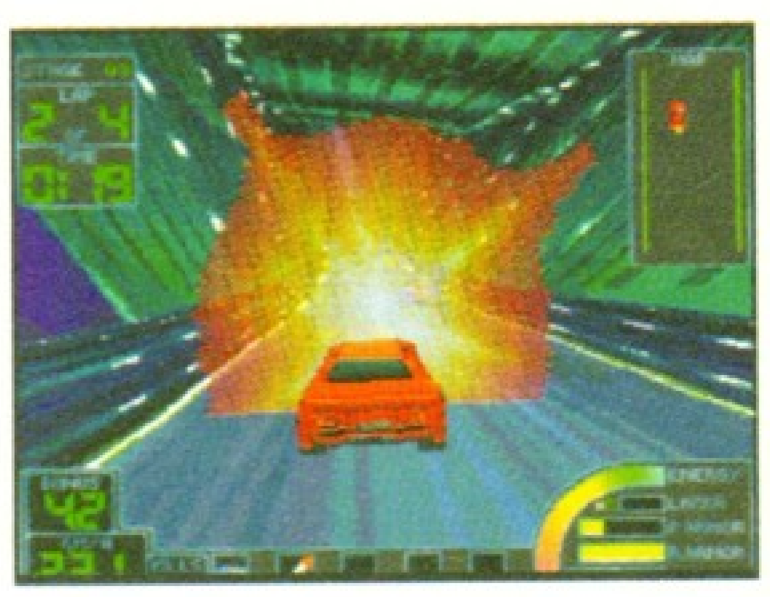
Impact Racing first appeared on the PlayStation several months ago and received various decent reviews in the magazines, and we suspect that much the same will happen now that the game is out on the Saturn.

Impact Racing takes the average 3D textured polygon road racer and adds in huge lashings of automobile destruction as you complete four laps of the four main courses. It's that simple really. To stay in the game you really need to dish out the destruction on your road-faring pals, as this enables you to upgrade your weaponry which furthers your chance of staying in the game.

The only thing wrong with this game is the lack of variety. This manifests itself in the gameplay, which although enjoyable is pretty samey and also in the different courses. There's only four different tracks, and you have to race them over and over again in various colour schemes the further you get into the game.

Other than that though, fairly intriguing stuff.







CD FILMS/MUSIC



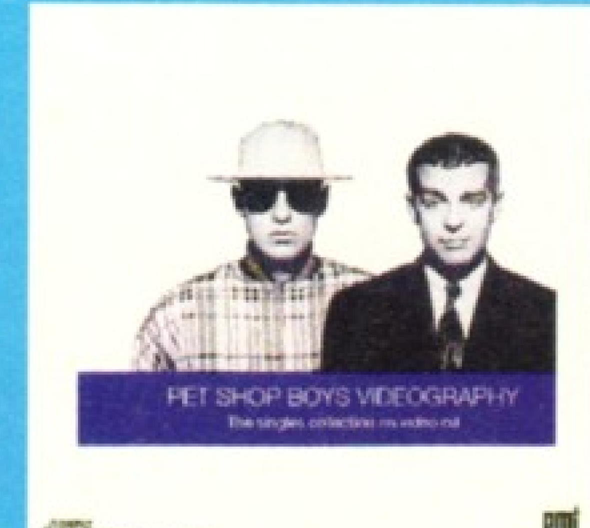



To play any of these titles, you'll need a video cd card, costing £170. See your retailer for more details.

PET SHOP BOYS

BY PMI | PRICE £15.99 | RATING ★★

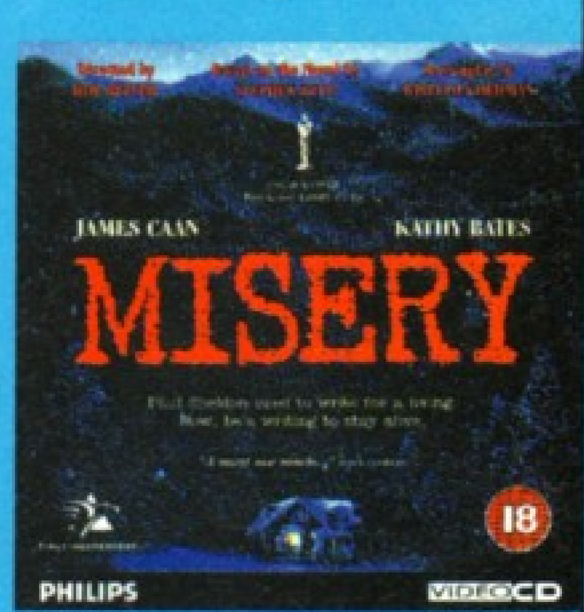
If you've spent £150 on an MPEG card, it's a safe bet that you already have a VCR in your house. Therefore a Video CD would be expected to fulfil certain criteria before counting itself as a viable purchase. It shouldn't cost much more than a video, the quality of the recording should be at least up to stream with that of the tape. And you should be able to skip to your favourite bits easily. So that's one of the criteria sorted. The first two, however, aren't so fully satisfied. In fact, they aren't satisfied at all. Given that this compilation appeared on video last year, looking better and costing less any PSB fan worth their salt would already have got it. If you haven't, buy the vid.



MISERY

BY PHILIPS | PRICE £15.99 | RATING ★★★

Stephen King, right, might be the master of modern horror and all that, but it doesn't mean he can write very well. In fact, the most horrific things he's done are to grow his tragic moustache and form a band with John McEnroe. Misery, aptly titled, is his story about some bloke falling off a road and getting bandaged by a crazy lady. And it's not half bad, actually. Kathy Bates is ace as the loony nurse keeping James Caan locked up in her wintry shack. James Caan is on form as the writer locked up in the shack of loony nurse Kathy Bates. For those few of you who didn't see it on the telly, this is a gripping thriller-type thing with some good acting and wince-inducing brutality.



A TRIBUTE TO JELLY ROLL MORTON

BY PHILIPS | PRICE £15.99 | RATING

Jelly Roll Morton was, apparently, some kind of famous jazz musician years ago. Anyway, so groovy is our swinging daddio Jelly Roll that the Dukes of Dixieland have recorded their own tribute. Just as I was looking forward to some tyre-screeching chase action with Boss Hogg I was shocked to discover not a hint of the General Lee automobile in sight. In fact, having aged badly the Dukes of Dixieland are all portly gentlemen torturing musical instruments and looking sweaty. And no sign of the pouting Daisy Duke either. Pah. What a swizzle. If you're a major hardcore jazz fan there's a tiny chance you might be interested in this lacklustre live performance.



DROP ZONE

BY PHILIPS | PRICE £17.99 | RATING ★

Whoever thought that parachuting might make for a good action movie? The producers of Drop Zone (and Terminal Velocity), presumably. They were wrong. Drop Zone is a particularly preposterous movie, with a frankly appalling plot and acting bad enough to propel the Thunderbirds into Gielgud territory. Snipes gives a performance seemingly on AutoPilot while bad guy Gary Busey almost seems to be parodying his excellent Lethal Weapon turn. Not even worth hiring on vid (or watching on Sky), Drop Zone's one redeeming factor is the amazing quality of the audio-video - for once, MPEG lives up to its claims of being better than VHS.



ALSO OUT NOW

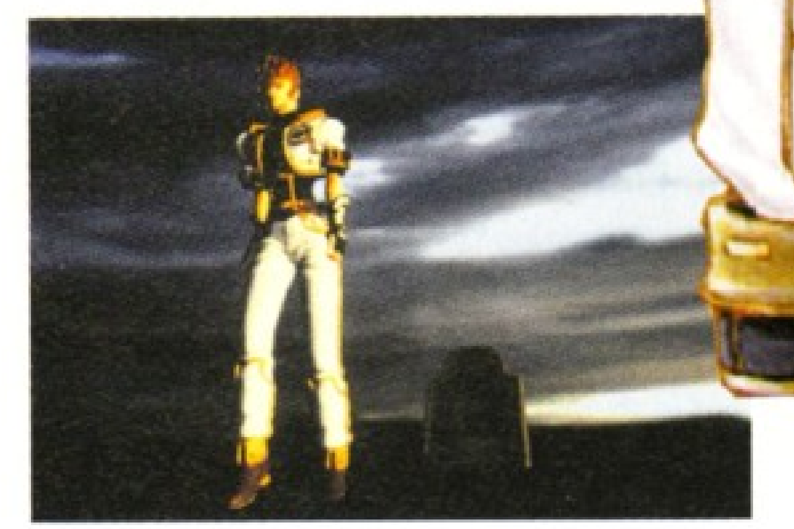
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Introducing...

At the moment, the DDD Project remains a super top secret affair. The company could tell us everything about the game. But then they'd have to kill us. Which would mean that you wouldn't get an issue of SSM to read next month. Which would be a shame because we've got Saturn Sonic next month. Honest!









At the Tokyo Game Show in August, Takara (they of Toshinden fame) released the first news of their most top secret of projects: DDD. Although the name of the game was revealed, nothing more was made obvious - even the game genre remained secret!

However, over the course of time it became known that DDD is a true next generation 3D fighting game, far removed from the Virtua Fighters and Tekkens... and indeed the Toshindens of the world. Takara still haven't released any actual screenshots of the game, but insiders from Japanese magazines Saturn Fan and Sega Saturn Magazine are reporting that this is a very hot title - truly one to watch out for. Game features include side-steps and spin-turns (building on what AM2 have achieved with VF3), plus true interactive with the backgrounds. You can jump off walls, ceilings and launch surprise counter attacks on your opponent! Every stage has a different lay-out to learn and exploit.

Takara have invested heavily in this game, going for super-realistic motion capture, brilliant CG intros and what-have-you, and from all accounts, this should be one heck of a game. The screenshots on this page show the intro only unfortunately, but we should have some ace shots maybe in time for the next issue. Fingers crossed eh?

DDD, or D-XHIRD as it may be renamed (the "X" comes from the Egyptian letter which represents "T" so it should be read D-THIRD, with the three Ds being the three destinies), is due for a Japanese release in Spring, 1997.







Takara have thrown the full weight of their not inconsiderable R&D department behind the DDD Project, and that includes going to all the lengths of setting up a Motion Capture studio and getting martial artists to strut their stuff. The motion-sensitive computers log the movements of the Ping Pong ball sensors and replicate the movements on computer rendered characters. Intriguing.



Dear Newsagent,
In my view, SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE is the greatest monthly publication in the world and I want you - yes YOU - to put it aside for me on a monthly basis, in case they're all stolen. Or bought. Or abducted by aliens or something.

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NEXT MONTH...

Next Month in SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE: Tempest 2000 - the greatest Saturn blaster ever? Virtual On - robo-frenzy is finally complete! But best of all: SONIC IS BACK! And this time he's on Saturn! The full EXCLUSIVE next month! Plus LOADS of reviews! Rucks of them in fact.

SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE, January Issue, out 17 December.



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COMING SOON ON THE SATURN



Dark Saviour due Jan



Syndicate Wars due Jan



Soviet Strike due November



Daytona USA CCE due Nov



Vampire Hunter due Dec



Street Racer due Nov



Streetfighter Alpha 2 due November



Virtua Cop 2 due December



Duke Nukem 3D due December

SATURN RELEASE LIST

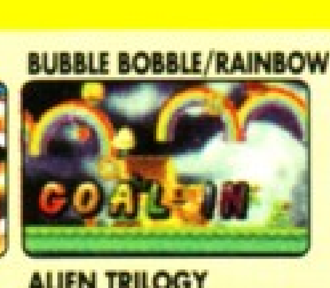
FOLLOWING IS A LIST OF PROVISIONAL RELEASE DATES FOR FORTHCOMING RELEASES. PLEASE REMEMBER THESE ARE INTENDED AS A GUIDE ONLY AND WE CANNOT BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY CHANGES OR DELAYS.

Breakpoint	28th November
Crime Wars	24th November
Dawn of Darkness	December
Daytona USA CCE	13th November
Doom	1st December
Dragonheart: Fire & Steel	January
Earthworm Jim 2	24th November
FIFA '97	29th November
Hardcore 4X4	18th November
Hexen	end November
Impact Racing	29th November
Iron Man XO	15th November
Manx TT	4th December
NHL Powerplay	29th November
PGA Tour Golf '97	6th December
Pinball Graffiti	29th November
Project Overkill	January
Soviet Strike	January
Streetfighter Alpha 2	29th November
Street Racer	mid November
Syndicate Wars	January
Tunnel B1	28th November
Viper	January
Virtua Cop 2	27th November
WWF In Your House	29th November
X2	29th November

SATURN GAMES



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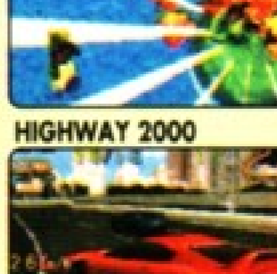
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Fighting Vipers

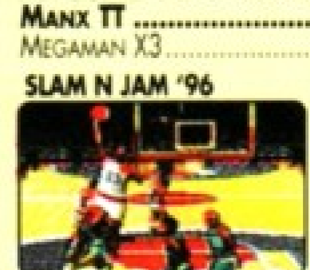


Legend of Thor



Exhumed

Highway 2000



Slam N Jam '96



Starfighter 3000



1. EXHUMED
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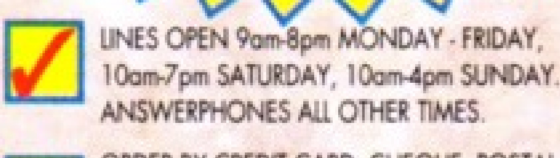
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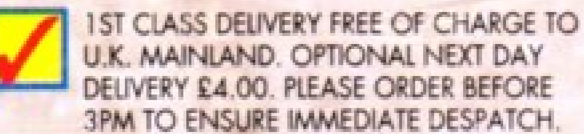
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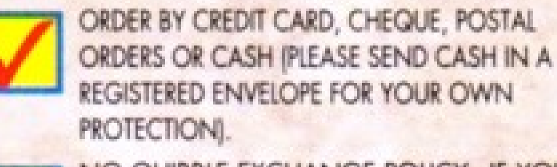
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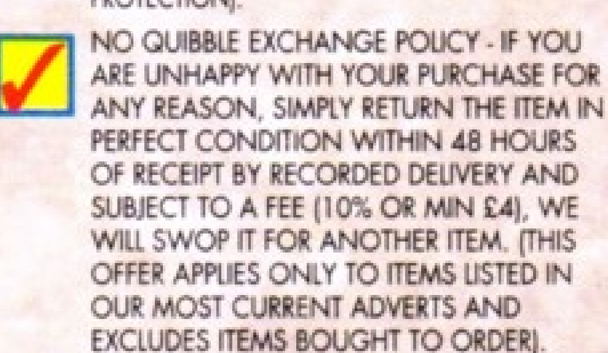
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